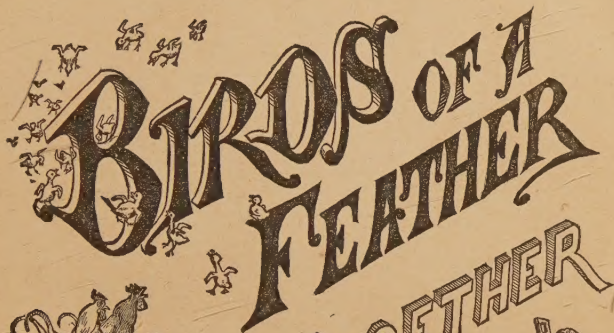


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BIRDS
OF A
FEATHER
FLOCK
TOGETHER
—
SOTHERN







BIRDS OF A FEATHER



OR



FLOCK TOGETHER TALKS WITH



SOTHERN



EDITED BY

F. G. De FONTAINE



NEW YORK :

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INTRODUCTION.

EDWARD ASKEW SOTHERN, the great actor, numbers his friends and admirers by thousands, on both sides of the Atlantic. As the author of those wondrous creations of Dundreary, Brother Sam, "The Crushed Tragedian," and other characters, marked by genius and intense individuality, he has, the editor believes, added another boon to the public by making this book possible. Although its contents were gleaned, from time to time, in conversations with the eminent artist and his friends, they cannot convey the genial glow of his own happy words, the sparkle of his merry laughter, or the subtle mimicry which makes Sothern as a story-teller justly famous on two continents. Nevertheless, it is to be hoped that the bubble and flavor of his narratives are herein more or less retained, and that the reader will be refreshed by the frolicsome experiences of such a frank and sunny nature.

A few words may be pardoned here in regard to the artistic work of Mr. Sothern. Coming into the notice of play-goers at a period when the best talent and

genius of the century were represented on the dramatic stage, he achieved a success which was indeed phenomenal, in Dundreary ; but the apparent spontaneity of the ludicrous character was the result of patient enduring toil, of intelligent study and happy intuition. He it was who rounded the slender outlines of the silly lord until they became a living possibility. With patient elaboration, touch by touch, with the skill of a consummate artist, true to his art, the work was completed harmoniously perfect in gesture, graceful in movement, and is a lasting testimony of the author's skill, judgment and genius.

That Mr. Sothern's mind is original and inventive his later work eminently shows. In "David Garrick," that production abounding in delicate tints and shades, yet so full of striking contrasts of color, where every gradation of comedy is portrayed, and the delineation of a many-sided character marvelously rendered, is to be found a striking example of these qualities. Great, however, as is the character of Garrick in Mr. Sothern's hands, his Fitz Altamont, in the "Crushed Tragedian," marked one of the greatest achievements in his career, in the entire obliteration of what was called his individuality in all of his old characters, and determined his ability as an author, no less than his versatility as an actor. He is always remarkable for correct instinct in matters pertaining to his art, and never hesitates to cut himself loose from stage traditions, whenever they conflict with his judgment or refined taste.

If a word of excuse is needed for this apparent recapitulation of some of Mr. Sothern's triumphs, it is in the fact that to write about him at all seems impossi-

ble, without connecting him with the works which have made him celebrated. The glimpses of the many-sided nature of the man to be found in the pages of this book, the undertone of refinement, the quiet philosophy, the boyish humor, the gentle heart overflowing with charity, will be to many persons, perhaps, a picture more captivating even than Dundreary, David Garrick, the Crushed Tragedian, or Sydney Spoonbill, on the mimic stage.

It should be stated in conclusion that whatever responsibility may attach to the subject-matter of the volume belongs solely to the undersigned. The reminiscences are given with much the same freedom as were the original off-hand conversations out of which the book has grown, and the author here makes his acknowledgments to Mr. Sothern for the courtesy which, even though reluctantly shown, permitted this publication.

THE EDITOR.

“BIRDS OF A FEATHER FLOCK TOGETHER.”

EDWARD A. SOTHERN.

It is not a matter of wonder that Sothern is spoken of as “a prince of good fellows.” He is magnetic in manner, humorous in speech, rich in reminiscence, responsive and sympathetic, a good listener, an equally good talker, and always sparkling like a newly-opened bottle of champagne. With such a battery of social forces, added to ability of a high order in the representation of the peculiar characters with which his name is now identified on both sides of the Atlantic, professional success has been a legitimate result. In person Mr. Sothern is probably five feet ten inches in height, and put together as if intended for hard work. He is wiry, elastic, as restless as a bundle of nerves under galvanic influence, and would be marked in any crowd as a man possessed of strong individuality and unusual personal characteristics. In age the actor

has been so well preserved that, like Tim Linkinwater, he might have been born one hundred and fifty years old and gradually come down to five and twenty, for he seems younger every birthday than he was the year before. In truth, however, he is fifty-one years of age, and milord chucklingly refers to the fact that, having come into the world on the first of April, "Dundreary" and his "Brother Sam" are naturally April fools. His face, undisturbed by a wrinkle or a line of trouble, and habitually quiet, is still lighted up under a mass of beautiful white hair by a pair of bright bluish-gray eyes, which look as if they were undergoing continual drill to keep them in proper subjection. It is a countenance full of expression—now as imperturbable as if it were carved out of *lignum vitæ*, a perfect dead wall, and again filled with a crowd of welcomes shining out of every smile. A long gray moustache hides the mouth, but fails to conceal the many little lights that hover around the corners, especially when the mental fireworks are let off, and one begins to feel as if he were an *aurora borealis*. Tidy in dress, with little or no display of jewelry, socially a Goldsmith Maid going at her level best, ingenuous, open and frank in the acknowledgment of a foible or an error, such is an off-hand pen portrait of Edward A. Sothern, the actor.

As a conversationalist Mr. Sothern has few superiors, inasmuch as he combines in a rare degree memory,

imagination, humor, and a dramatic power of description that invests with a charm whatever he may narrate. It is at the head of his own table, however, and in his own home, when surrounded by suggestive and sympathetic guests, that he is always to be heard to the best advantage. Under conditions of this character, covering a series of weeks, most of the reminiscences in the present volume have been seized upon and committed to paper. Justice to the narrator compels the remark that the incidents, as written, but faintly represent the vivacity of the originals, for it is not within the province of printed thought to portray the sparkle of the eye or the unctuousness of manner that marks the perfect telling of his stories.

The parlors of Mr. Sothern at the Gramercy Park Hotel, in New York, are familiar to hundreds of the most noted citizens of the country, and these have represented all of the professions, from the ballet dancer to the clergyman. Once within the suite, the invited guest is expected to be thoroughly at home ; if a musician, to exercise to his heart's content upon the grand piano ; if an artist, to enjoy the works of art that abound ; and if a *bon vivant*, to make merry with the spacious sideboard. In every sense, the hospitality is refined, and the generosity unrestrained.

It was only a few days prior to the beginning of these pages, that a number of gentlemen being assembled here, one of them asked Mr. Sothern if he had any

objection to relate some of the circumstances connected with his early career and subsequent success.

“None whatever, only,”—turning to a collection of photographs on the mantle-piece, and picking up three or four, he replied,—“it’s a long, long story; for a man with a twenty-year-old lad like that, who is already on the stage, another like this, who is a student in an English college of art, and a girl of twelve, scarcely knows where to begin to recite his memories. Fill your glasses, however, and listen.

THE ACTOR’S EARLY LIFE.

“I was educated for some years by a private tutor, with the queer name of Dr. Redhead, the rector of an English church, it being understood that I should become a surgeon. I attended all the operations for a couple of years in the Middlesex Hospital, London, but the disgusting scenes of the dissecting room so sickened me that I abandoned the work. After that I studied theology for two or three years, and theological books are even to-day my favorite reading. Without going too deeply into the matter, I may say that my investigations in this direction and many controversies with clergymen threw a wet blanket on my ambition to represent the church militant, and determined the bent of my mind in another direction. It was not long before I commenced the study of the

old dramas, and as an amateur appeared at the Theatre Royal, Island of Jersey, in the character of Othello, on the occasion of a benefit. Although it was an extremely bad performance on my part, the manager offered me an engagement at a salary of thirty-five shillings a week. I indignantly refused it, and the consequence was that a little while afterward, I was obliged to accept a salary of fifteen shillings a week. I was then about twenty-one years of age. On my arrival at the theatre, in Guernsey, where I had been engaged, I found the play of 'Hamlet' announced for the first night, and that I was cast for Laertes, the Ghost, and the Second Actor. Jupiter ! how staggered I was at that ! I had a memorandum stuck on the wings to tell me when to make my changes. Some practical joker took the memorandum down, and the consequence was, that relying on my memory I was continually bounding on the stage in the wrong character. Oh, the agony of that night ! Fancy the Ghost going on to act as Laertes ! I was immediately dismissed for incapacity. In fact, that entire portion of my professional career was marked by frequent dismissals for incapacity.

A REMINISCENCE OF CHARLES KEAN.

"A few months after this I was playing at Weymouth, England. The 'Scotch Greys' were quartered

at Dorchester, a few miles distant, and Charles Kean was on a visit to some of the officers. A friend of mine persuaded Kean to come and see me play 'Claude Melnotte' and 'Used Up.' The next morning I received a letter from Kean, which, by the way, I have now, saying that he heard I was a novice, and strongly advising me to adopt the stage as a profession. He also kindly pointed out my many faults, but soothed me with the remark that I had great originality. A year after this, when acting in Portsmouth, I received another letter from Mr. Kean, asking if it would be convenient for me to play the same character in which he had seen me, adding that he would send a friend to give his judgment concerning my progress and improvement. Unfortunately, however, I lost the opportunity. From Portsmouth I went to Wolverhampton and Birmingham, my highest salary being thirty-five shillings a week, for which I played Romeos, Mercutios, and all the juvenile and light comedy business. I then had a season of broad low comedy parts. After this Mr. Lacy, the dramatic publisher of London, made me an offer of \$25 a week to go to Boston, where I opened in Dr. Pangloss and a low farce called 'John Dobbs.' My failure in Pangloss was complete, although the audience were kind enough, because I was a stranger, to call me before the curtain and so give me encouragement. The papers cut me up mercilessly and

unanimously, but I had just enough common sense to know that their remarks were strictly true. I was again dismissed for incapacity. I then went to the Howard Athenæum to play juvenile parts, at a reduced salary. They dismissed me again for incapacity.

FIRST EXPERIENCE IN NEW YORK.

“Discovering that Boston was not exactly the field for success, I came to New York, and applied to Mr. Barnum, who was then running his Museum where the *Herald* building now stands; told him in a straightforward manner all that had occurred, and asked him to give me an opportunity of playing twice a day. I felt that all I wanted was constant practice and experience. He engaged me at a salary of \$20 a week, and a little while afterwards raised it to \$25. I did play twice a day, and on Thanksgiving Day six times; but it did me an enormous deal of good. After that Mr. Marshall, of the Broadway, engaged me for \$40 a week, to play here and at the National Theatre, Washington. I mention these details only to show you what we of the old school had to undergo in order to achieve success. The very fact that we were obliged to play so many parts created a repose which, it seems to me, few of our modern actors possess. After this I went to

Baltimore under the management of Laura Keene, at a salary of \$50 a week, and from there transferred my allegiance to Mr. Wallack, with whom I remained four years. During this time I was waiting for an opportunity, and in every piece produced I always studied such parts as Lester Wallack and Charles Walcott were cast for, and prepared myself at any moment to take their places. My stars! how I used to work in those days; often until three and four o'clock in the morning, and four or five hours a day when there was no rehearsal. The long looked for occasion, however, never occurred until Miss Matilda Heron's engagement to play Camille. Every one predicted that she would make a fiasco. Three days before its production Mr. Wallack asked me if I could study the part of Armand Duval in time. To his amazement I informed him that I was already 'up' in it, and I went to the rehearsal the next morning. Miss Heron's success was pronounced, and for the first time in my life I received several enthusiastic 'calls.' This was my first upward move to that position in the profession to which I had aspired for years. It was only a week or two before this that I had made up my mind to return to England and seek some other employment. Leaving Wallack's I went to Laura Keene's Theatre, in this city, now known as the Olympic.

LORD DUNDREARY.

“Here was produced for the first time the piece known as the ‘American Cousin,’ by Tom Taylor. I was cast for the part of Lord Dundreary, a fourth-rate old man, with only forty-seven lines to speak. I refused the part at first, but finally agreed with Mr. Burnett, the stage manager, to play on the condition that I should entirely rewrite it. Miss Keene was also full of objections, which however she finally yielded. In rewriting the part I threw into it everything that struck me as wildly absurd. There is not a single look, word or act in Lord Dundreary that has not been suggested to me by people whom I have known since I was five years of age. It has been said that I have cut the piece down for the purpose of Dundrearyizing the performance. This is not true. I have simply cut out the bad cellar scene, a drunken act, which would not now be popular, and so rearranged the play that instead of seventeen scenes, which it had when it came from the hands of Tom Taylor, it is in four acts of one scene each.

“My part the first night was by no means a pronounced success. In fact, it was two or three weeks before the people began to understand what I was about. I had acted so many serious parts before that the public evidently considered that every tone of my

voice ought be pathetic, just as they now seem to think that every tone represents some mad eccentricity."

THE DUNDREARY HOP.

"How," asked one of the guests, "did you happen to hit on that strange hop, skip and jump business, which has been made so effective in your delineation of the character?"

"Why," said Mr. Sothern laughingly, "it was the simplest thing in the world; it was a mere accident. I have naturally an elastic disposition, and during a rehearsal one cold morning I was hopping at the back of the stage when Miss Keene sarcastically inquired if I was going to introduce that in Dundreary. The actors and actresses standing around laughed, and taking the cue, I replied, 'Yes, Miss Keene, that's my view of the character.' Having said this, I was bound to stick to it, and as I progressed with the rehearsal, I found that the whole company, including scene shifters and property men, were roaring with laughter at my infernal nonsense. When I saw that the public accepted the satire I toned it down to the broad caricature which may be seen at the present day by any one who has a quick sense of the absurd.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER.

"You remember that in one act I have a byplay on



my fingers, on which I count from one to ten, and then reversing, begin with the right thumb and count ten, nine, eight, seven, six and five are eleven. This has frequently been denounced by critics as utterly out of place in the character, but I took the incident from actual life, having seen a notoriously clever man on the English turf as quick as lightning in calculating odds completely puzzled by this ridiculous problem. My distortion of the old aphorisms has likewise been frequently cavilled at as too nonsensical for an educated man. Now see how easily this thought was suggested. A number of us some years ago were taking supper in Halifax after a performance, when a gentleman who has now retired from the stage, but who is living in New York, suddenly entered the room and said, 'Oh, yes, I see; birds of a feather, &c.' The thought instantly struck me on the weak side, and, winking at my brother actors and assuming utter ignorance, I said, 'What do you mean by birds of a feather?' He looked rather staggered and replied, 'What, have you never heard of the old English proverb, "Birds of a feather flock together"?' Every one shook his head. He then said:—'I never met such a lot of ignoramuses in my life.' That was my cue, and I began to turn the proverb inside out. I said to him, 'There never could have been such a proverb—birds of a feather! the idea of a whole flock of birds only having one feather! The thing is utterly

ridiculous. Besides, the poor bird that had that feather must have flown on one side; consequently as the other birds couldn't fly at all, they couldn't flock together. But even accepting the absurdity, if they flocked at all they must flock together, as no bird could possibly be such a damned fool as to go into a corner and try and flock by himself.' Our visitor began to see the point of the logic, and was greeted with roars of laughter. I made a memorandum of the incident, and years afterward elaborated the idea in writing Dundreary. I have quires upon quires of memoranda of a similar character; but whenever I play the part the public seem so disappointed at not hearing the old lines that I fear I shall never have the opportunity of getting them to accept what would really be a much better version.

A NEW DUNDREARY.

"I have hit upon a plan, however, which I think may make this a safe experiment. I have now in hand a three-act farcical comedy, entitled 'The Founder of the Family,' in which I shall play the father of Dundreary and Brother Sam. Of course I have taken the character from myself, and from the fact that I am an exceedingly nervous man and thoroughly imbued with the characteristics of the original Dundreary, I shall be able to make it one of the most ridiculous of

absent-minded and eccentric creations on the stage. In London the success of Dundreary was immediate, the character striking the humorous side of the people. As a proof of the truth of the satire the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, was crowded for 496 nights with the aristocracy of England. During this period I found my type of 'Brother Sam.' He was a man with only £400 a year, who mixed in the very highest circles of society. There was not a blemish on his name, and yet, strangely enough, he lived at the rate of £5,000 or £6,000 a year. Of course I added to his peculiarities others which I saw in scores of people there. 'Brother Sam' was received at the same theatre with enthusiasm.

"DAVID GARRICK."

"Previous to this, however, I had determined to follow Dundreary with 'David Garrick,' as Thackeray and John Leech, both dear old friends of mine, strongly endeavored to impress upon me the fact that it was utterly impossible to make a great success with my second impersonation. Buckstone, the manager, did his utmost also to prevent my playing 'David Garrick,' believing that I could not depict pathos; he did not know the school through which I had passed in America. The critics cut me up root and branch, but 'Garrick' grew nightly in attractiveness and became a

success. It was not owing to my performance, however. The piece was saved by the exquisite acting of Miss Nellie Moore, who is now dead. She played the part of Ada. Neither the public nor the press were prepared for the dangerous jump I made from Dundreary to Garrick. They evidently waited for the fun-making points, and I had to compromise by rewriting the second act of 'Garrick,' which, you will remember, is the drunken scene, in order to secure the humorous effect. During the last fourteen years I have played it much more frequently than Dundreary, both in England and America. It may seem egotistical to say so, but John Oxenford, the famous London critic, who is now dead, in an article in the *Saturday Review*, was kind enough to write that I ought also to be called the author as well as the creator of 'Brother Sam.' I likewise wrote the love scene in 'Home.'"

THE AUTHORSHIP OF "HOME" AND "DAVID GARRICK."

In this connection it may be interesting to the reader to peruse the following letter, inasmuch as it will remove any doubt concerning Mr. Sothern's share in the authorship both of "Home" and of "David Garrick":

PARK THEATRE, NEW YORK, Nov. 2, 1877.

To the Editor of the Herald:

Having been interviewed by a *Herald* reporter some

weeks ago I casually mentioned that I had written the "love scene" in Tom Robertson's comedy entitled "Home." The interview was copied by the London *Era* and elicited the following somewhat offensive reply from Mr. T. W. S. Robertson, the late Tom Robertson's son :

To the Editor of the Era (London) :

SIR—In Mr. Sothorn's word of mouth biography of himself, which appeared in last week's edition of the *Era*, he states that he wrote the love scene in "Home" at the request of Mr. Tom Robertson. To this assertion I beg to give the most unqualified denial. Is it likely that Mr. Tom Robertson would have allowed any man to write the "love scene," of all scenes, in a piece of his? Mr. Sothorn's imagination has been known to carry him away at times, and in this case considerably. It would not be just to my father's memory to allow Mr. Sothorn's remark to pass unnoticed. All that he can claim for his own, as regards "Home," is an unlimited and unnecessary number of "gags." Apologizing for troubling you, I am, yours truly,

T. W. S. ROBERTSON.

Standard Theatre, Bishopsgate,

Wednesday, Oct. 2, 1877.

In response to the foregoing remarkable letter I have only to add that my original statement is emphatically true. Mr. Robertson never was satisfied

with his version of "Home," and on several occasions appealed to me to make such alterations and improvements as might be suggested. I did so, and the "love scene," in the second act, with the exception of a few lines, is the result. That it likewise proved a success is attested by the commendation which it has everywhere received when played. The part that I act in "Home" requires no "gags," and would not admit of them. Hence the reference to the term by Mr. T. W. S. Robertson is uncalled for and offensive. I have too large an admiration for the memory of the dead author to say a word that could be construed as a reflection on his memory, but justice to myself requires that I should contradict the mis-statements and correct the ignorance of his son. The following unsolicited note from my friend, Mr. Lester Wallack, will doubtless set the matter at rest :

WALLACK'S THEATRE, October 29, 1877.

MY DEAR SOTHERN—Permit me to bear testimony to the truth of your statement with regard to the late Tom Robertson's play of "Home." The "love scene" in the second act was conceived and written by you. This Mr. Robertson told me himself. And when you so kindly gave me the printed book of the comedy your scene was inserted in MS., and a capital scene it is. Always yours truly,

LESTER WALLACK.

I have only to add that Mr. Tom Robertson not unfrequently fell short of his own ideal in his work. His play of "David Garrick," as can be proved by Mr. J. B. Buckstone, the manager of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, London, was literally unsuitable for representation until he and I rewrote a considerable part of it, and even now I am from time to time engaged in making further improvement. The manner of Mr. T. W. S. Robertson in addressing the public demands explanation, and until it is made he cannot worthily wear the title of a gentleman. I am, sir, yours obediently,

E. A. SOTHERN.

HISTORY OF "DAVID GARRICK."

The host being further questioned concerning the history of the play of "David Garrick," and the manner in which it came to be put upon the stage, Mr. Sothorn replied :

"'David Garrick' was translated from a German piece called 'Doctor Garrick' by Tom Robertson. It was adapted by two French dramatists, one of whom made a three-act comedy, and the other a one-act farce. The translation by Robertson was a very rough one, and he sold it to Mr. Lacy, the dramatic publisher, for £10. Lacy subsequently endeavored to dispose of the manuscript, but it was rejected by all the managers in London. No one would touch it, and he kept

'David Garrick' in his drawer for eight years. It was during this period that I became acquainted with Robertson and formed a close and intimate friendship which endured until the poor fellow's death. He told me that if I would play a piece of his, it would be the beginning of his fortune, and day after day we sat together contriving and discussing plots. The result was the production of 'Society,' which was eventually performed at the Prince of Wales' Theatre. Before this, however, I had read it to Buckstone, the manager of the Haymarket, who came to the conclusion that my part was not strong enough to make a success. Acting on his advice I reluctantly returned the manuscript to Robertson. It was then that he found a purchaser in Miss Marie Wilton—now Mrs. Bancroft—who, as every one knows, played it with great success at the Prince of Wales'. Mr. Bancroft, who played the part which was intended for me, certainly made more of it than I could possibly have done. Robertson felt quite low-spirited over the rejection of the play by Buckstone, notwithstanding my constant endeavor to give him encouragement.

"In the course of a conversation one day he mentioned incidentally that many years ago he had translated a German comedy entitled 'Doctor Davy,' and recited the plot to me. It was so slight and thread-like, however, that an ordinary page of note paper would have sufficed to describe the whole thing. Notwith-

standing this, I was struck by the simplicity of the story, and saw at a glance that it contained the elements of success in permitting a certain kind of character acting which I believed could be made attractive by reason of its novelty. When the piece was read to Buckstone, he at first refused to have anything to do with it, but I finally persuaded him to put it on the stage. Rehearsal after rehearsal took place, a vast amount of alteration was made—and, by-the-by, Buckstone never omits to give me credit for re-writing as I mentioned before nearly the whole of the second act—and when it was finally produced under the name of ‘David Garrick,’ it met with a reception as flattering as the success was unequivocal. That’s the history of ‘David Garrick.’

THE “CRUSHED TRAGEDIAN.”

“In my judgment, however, ‘The Crushed Tragedian,’ my latest and newest part, if not the best in my *repertoire*, is likely to command popular favor at once wherever performed, and to retain its hold upon the stage for many years. It is replete with pathos and yet gives the leading actor an opportunity for very strong character representation. It was originally produced in London under the title of the ‘Prompter’s Box,’ the part of the prompter being personated by Benjamin Webster. As I was acting at the Haymarket

Theatre at the time, I could not see the piece performed. Mr. Byron is the author. Afterwards, when in Philadelphia, a friend of mine asked me why I had never played Fitz Altamont, and informed me of the points of the part. I telegraphed to Byron for a copy, read it carefully and came to the conclusion that it could be so elaborated as to exactly fit my style. It appeared that if I could good-naturedly satirize the old school of acting, contrasting it through the several characters, with the present school, I should arrive at the same effects in another manner which were produced in Dundreary ; that is to say, that though stigmatized by everybody as a very bad tragedian, I should gain the sympathy of the audience in the satire, however much they might laugh at my peculiarities. The character is not an imitation of any actor I ever have seen. I have simply boiled down all the old school tragedians as I boiled down all the fops I had met before I played Dundreary. I tested the piece in Philadelphia and its success was immediate. Still I am attached to my first love, Dundreary, and from time to time during my professional career shall continue to present him to the public."

A CRITICISM OF THE "CRUSHED."

The following criticism is from the Philadelphia *Inquirer* (January, 1878), and is not more graceful than it is just :

"MR. SOTHERN IN 'THE CRUSHED TRAGEDIAN.'

"Mr. Sothern's impersonation of Fitz Altamont, the Crushed tragedian, is the more impressive the oftener it is seen, and the more attentively it is studied. To fully appreciate its surpassing merits as a dramatic realization, it is necessary to do something more than look and laugh. It is only when we have seen Mr. Sothern's performances so often that we can forego the enjoyment of the playgoer, to watch with the eyes of a student, that the artistic power of the creation is revealed. Then, and not till then, do we begin to understand what a creation his Fitz Altamont really is.

"Much has been said of the wonderful versatility of the actor who could, from Dundreary, transform himself with such magical completeness into that utter antithesis of the English fop, the sombre, misanthropic, theatrical Altamont; but this versatility, noteworthy as it is, is one of the least remarkable characteristics of the impersonation. Mr. Sothern's impersonation shows in a greater degree, perhaps, than anything he has ever done before; but the greatest merit of his Fitz Altamont lies in this: out of a mere thing of shreds and patches, out of a stage tradition, a conventional laughing stock, a popular butt, he has created a living, sentient human being. Into the dry bones of a common caricature he has breathed vitality.

“For it is just as impossible not to recognize in the ‘crushed’ a fellow being, having the same feelings and affections as ourselves, as it is not to laugh at the strange eccentricities which distinguish him. ‘Fitz’ is human to begin with, and so commands our sympathies. He is also in dead earnest. He believes in his own powers with all his might and main. His vanity is equal to that which consumed the heart of Malvolio, and his vanity impels him as it impelled the cross-gartered steward, to believe anything of himself and his capacities. From some reason or other Fitz Altamont has taken up the idea that he is a tragic genius, and he believes that with all his heart and soul. When he announces himself as being crushed it is with the utmost sincerity. The spectator knows better. He knows that his vanity is Altamont’s sole stock in trade, and thus the character becomes laughter-provoking.

“And how laughable it is, only those who have seen Mr. Sothern play it can form an idea. With what elaboration of detail does the actor embody his conception! There is not a gesture, not an intonation, not a movement, but seems to illustrate the character portrayed. He strides across the stage, and it is as though he were wading through a sea of gore; he mutters to himself, ‘Ha! ha!’ and you know that he is cursing fate with a bitterness loud and deep; he scowls, and it is plain that he thinks his frown is as

majestic as Olympian Jove himself ; he flings himself in a chair as though wearied with such a continual battling with destiny ; he leans, in contemplation, against the mantel-piece, and it is manifest that he is philosophically pondering, a la 'Hamlet,' upon the vanity of the world and its lack of appreciation for genius, and always and in all things poor Altamont is exquisitely, indescribably ludicrous.

"But whatever he says or does, no faintest suspicion that he is making himself ridiculous ever crosses his mind. He is without the least scintilla of humor, and, acting as he is all the time, he is all the time in deadly earnest. It is the world that is out of joint, not he. Mr. Sothern's impersonation of 'De Lacy Fitz Altamont' is no less an acquisition to the dramatic world than a triumph of the actor's talent."

THE "HORNET'S NEST."

"How do you account for the fact, "inquired a gentleman, "that a play so brim full of wit as your 'Hornet's Nest' is comparatively a failure, after such a successful representation as that of the 'Crushed Tragedian?'"

"From my point of judgment, it is not a failure. Much of the success of an English play is due to national temperament. The humor that affects an English audience is to a certain extent unlike that which

influences an American audience. What produces loud laughter in one country, merely creates a ripple of merriment in the other, and *vice versa*. I have noticed that nearly all of the critics on the American press have bestowed generous praise on the 'Hornet's Nest,' and especially on my part of Sydney Spoonbill, while the audiences have sometimes been cold. Had the same piece been produced in London, it would have been received with screams of laughter from beginning to end. My own impression is, that its chief fault consists in its lack of serious interest, for American audiences insist on backbone to a play. Mr. W. S. Gilbert's pieces, which are exquisitely written, and replete with the finest wit and satire, according to English notions, have rarely been successful in America, that is to say, among the masses. By the critics, and the highly educated few, however, their talent and originality are invariably commended. The same remark may be made with reference to Henry J. Byron's burlesques, although many of his dramas have been eminently successful.

"I am frequently asked why I don't play more parts in my old line of business, what might be called 'the romantic juvenile parts.' My answer is, that I am now fully convinced that in order to keep my hold on the public, I must for the future devote myself to strong, original characterizations."



A CRITICISM OF THE "HORNET'S NEST."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Sothern, turning to a portfolio, "this criticism by 'Trinculo' which I found in the New York *Spirit of the Times* will convey a good idea of the 'Hornet's Nest,' and the manner in which it strikes an intelligent mind. The writer says :

"The 'Hornet's Nest' proved to be one of Mr. Sothern's jokes. Perhaps I should say a thousand and one of his jokes.

"Everybody screamed at it, and then said it was thin. I believe everybody went back the next night and screamed again.

"Sydney Spoonbill, the hero of this absurdity, is no other person than our estimable friend, Mr. Sothern, himself, who smokes several good cigars, and keeps up a running commentary of wit and humor.

"If the paragraphers' club were to write a play, I think it would be like the 'Hornet's Nest.'

"'Crackling Thorns' would have been a better title for it.

"Such acting as it gives occasion for is exquisitely done. Mr. Sothern seems to have said, 'I will show you how fine it is for a player not to act at all. I will be perfectly natural, and never resort to a stage trick, and you shall see me walk up and down in an easy, nonchalant manner, saying all the funny things of

which the language is capable. You shall roar with the nonsense of it, and be tickled to death.'

"But pure, unadulterated fun for two hours and a half won't do. There must be a serious spot in it. Even a negro minstrel, who is the maddest wag alive in real life, has to black up, and have his serious moments.

"People don't like nature half as well as they do art. They don't want the real thing so heartily as they want the sham thing. A newspaper that is all paragraphs, and never an obituary or an outrage, is a dreadful affair.

"There is a popular notion that people go to the theatre now-a-days to be amused, I used to think so myself. But I've got over it. I think now that nine-tenths of them go to the play-house to have their feelings outraged; and if the playwright or the actor doesn't outrage them, they feel like the prude who hasn't been insulted by anybody.

"The 'Hornet's Nest' is in reality a mare's nest. It makes you search a good while, without finding anything. Mr. Sothern's hornets are jokes. They buzz all through it. Nobody can make such an idiotic pun as he. He used to strangle us with them when he played Dundreary: now he lets loose the whole swarm.

"By his jokes you may know him anywhere. Besides, he has got one of his love scenes in it. Who wrote that episode in the last act, where one lover sits on the edge of the table, and deals his pas-

sion out in *mots*, and swings his leg, and turns the language inside out, to see if it has any fun in it? And the other lovers sits in a chair, in a muslin dress, and looks sweet, and doesn't do anything else except laugh at the insane brilliancy of the fellow who is pulling her hand about.

"I wonder if that *is* the way people make love now-a-days. And if all the amorous passion of our natures *can* expend itself in gags, if we are self-possessed and well trained!

"Sothorn is a pre-Raphaelite. Nobody can reproduce nature in such minuteness as he, when he pleases. I call him a perfect artist.

"But I don't think much of the 'Hornet's Nest,' except for an afterpiece."

A LOVE STORY NECESSARY TO A SUCCESSFUL PLAY.

"To what do you ascribe the success of your plays?"

"I don't believe that either 'Dundreary' or the 'Crushed Tragedian' would have met with the extraordinary success which has attended their presentation in America, if it were not for the pretty love story that runs through both pieces like a kind of golden thread. Besides, Dundreary and Fitz Altamont, in spite of their strong peculiarities, are thorough gentlemen at heart. For the future I shall devote my-

self to what may be called 'Robsonian' parts—those which give me latitude for original conception. Of course this determination involves an immense amount of thought and work. I can master any light comedy or juvenile part in 48 hours, so far as the language is concerned ; but in the creation of a character, every look, tone, motive, that suggests or shades an individuality must be the subject of patient practice. The mere inflection of a voice will often make a difference with an appreciative audience, and the very cues have frequently to be delivered in a way which it is impossible to illustrate except by repeated rehearsals.

W. S. GILBERT, THE DRAMATIC AUTHOR.

"By the way, I referred a moment ago to W. S. Gilbert, the dramatic writer, who I look upon not only as one of the shining lights of modern dramatic literature, but an excellent, generous and high-toned gentleman. As an illustration of the kindness of his heart, about a year ago I made a proposition to him to write a comedy for me, which he agreed to do for the sum of two thousand guineas, to be paid on the delivery of the manuscript. I particularly requested him not to make an individual part for me inasmuch as I wished to select it myself. The play, when finished, was a beautiful composition, but after many weeks of thought and reading I came to the conclusion that the

character of an old man which Mr. Gilbert had created evidently for my own personation was not suited to my style and methods. In fact, he had made what might be called a 'part piece,' and I wrote to him to that effect. He replied in the most unselfish spirit, expressing his regrets that I had not been suited and offering to take back the play. I speak of this circumstance because it is an exceptional instance of large-heartedness on the part of one who might legally and reasonably have enforced his contract. It was an exquisite production, but practically too far in advance of the demands of the present time. I have a number of similar pieces that are almost open to the same criticism. What the people seem to require, at this moment, is not so much elegance of composition in which the real genius of the poet and the playwright is represented, as strong and exciting situations and characterizations."

HENRY J. BYRON.

"I infer from what you have said that you also greatly admire Henry J. Byron, the dramatic author."

"I do," answered Mr. Sothern, "and so will anyone who understands the character of the man, and appreciates his extraordinary facility for punning, twisting words inside out, and producing the wittiest of effects. One, however, frequently, must read his

burlesques before seeing them, in order to understand the nice shading which he employs in his word painting. As regards his plays when put upon the stage, not one company in a hundred can give the necessary point to Byron's witticisms without seeming to force them. I know him well, and never have met a gentleman in all my travels who more completely coruscated with brilliant thoughts and repartee. A stenographer could almost write an admirable burlesque by taking down what Byron says at his own dinner table, because his humor is thrown off so easily and naturally. Wit with him is spontaneous, and when in the mood every sentence is an epigram. It is a prevailing impression that Byron writes too rapidly, but to my certain knowledge he frequently does not take a pen in hand for weeks at a time. I have often seen him after a chatty dinner go to his desk and make a half-dozen memoranda. During that time he has probably evolved the skeleton of a play. He never commences a drama wondering how he is going to finish it; the frame work is all clear before he puts pen to paper. The beginning and end of every act is definitely settled; as to the dialogue, that comes to him more rapidly than he can scribble. I once asked him why he didn't use a short-hand reporter. He replied that the scratching of his quill on the paper was like music to him. Another thing: he scarcely ever is guilty of an erasure, and when he has once

written a piece he has the strongest possible objection to alterations. He rarely goes to see a first night's performance of his own work, and a play once produced seems to lose all interest in his mind, doubtless because it is so quickly succeeded by the plot of the next which you may be sure he will speedily write. In social life Byron is extremely domesticated and is rarely seen in public. I should say that he has not more than two or three friends in the world whom he regards as intimate associates. In fact his life is all work, but such pleasant work to him that it never becomes tiresome or monotonous.

BYRON'S WIT.

"I spoke about his quickness of wit and repartee. An incident or two will illustrate it.

"The celebrated Poole of Burlington street was Byron's tailor for a number of years. Now Byron was always a well dressed man, though quiet in his style, but from some cause or another was continually abusing Poole because, as he said : 'he can't fit me at all.' The real reason was that he would never try his clothes on. One day while Byron was at the Garrick Club, some one came in and exclaimed : 'By Jove ! Have you heard the news ? Poole the tailor is dead !' 'Dead ! the Devil he is,' remarked one of the com-

pany present. 'What did he die of?' 'He died of a fit.' Byron's immediate rejoinder was, 'I'll wager a sovereign that he died of a *misfit*.'

"One of Byron's pleasant traits is that, pungent as his wit may be, he rarely, if ever, permits himself to hurt the feelings of another, always preferring to sacrifice the point of a brilliant thought if likely to injure the tender susceptibilities of a friend. It is so easy," said Mr. Sothern, "to say disagreeable things, and yet so hard to be witty without them. Jerrold would make a pun at any cost, and nurse a satire for days and weeks together until a favorable opportunity was presented for the impalement of some unhappy victim. One night at the Arundel Club in London, where a number of literary people were discussing the disposition to pun and play upon words, some one suggested Byron should be put to the test of instantly transforming any word that might be named, and giving it another meaning. Byron was evidently annoyed and rather tartly replied: 'Yes, any word that can be spoken in *this* company,' with a strong emphasis on *this*. The word mentioned was 'asafœtida.' Byron as quick as lightning replied, 'Imagine a scene in a burlesque. The king's daughter has run away with some poor nobleman, but being found is dragged in by a jailer whom the king orders to take her to prison and place in irons. A servant enters soon afterwards, and the king addresses him thus: "Well, hireling, 'as he

fettered her?" The company with a groan agreed that they had lost the wager."

ENGLISH ACTORS.

"Who among the old English actors at present occupy relatively the same positions that are held by our popular favorites in New York?"

"Well, among the old men Mr. Chippendale is the professional twin, if I may use the expression, of Mr. John S. Gilbert, of Wallack's; Mr. Compton compares with Mr. Harry Beckett, both representing the same peculiar dry humor. Mr. Toole, who was here two years, has his counterpart in Mr. W. J. Florence. Mr. Kendall would remind you of Mr. Lester Wallack. Mr. James, of the London Vaudeville Theatre, seems to me to stand alone. He is equally perfect in broad low comedy and domestic pathos. Mr. Howe, of the Haymarket Theatre, also stands in the foremost rank, both in comedy and tragedy. Mr. Terry and Mr. Thorne, low comedians and character actors, are particular favorites with the London public. Mr. Hare is a finished artist in old man parts.

"Among the actresses, I should certainly place Mrs. Bancroft and Mrs. Kendall in the foremost rank, their specialties being high comedy. Mrs. Bancroft I consider the best actress on the English stage; in fact I might say on any stage. She is probably thirty-eight

years of age. She commenced her profession as a burlesque actress, and was one of the best we have ever seen in England. When she took the Prince of Wales Theatre she discarded the burlesque business, and, to the amazement of everyone, proved herself the finest comedy actress in London. Her face, though not essentially pretty, is a mass of intelligence. Her husband, Mr. Bancroft, is an admirable actor in certain parts—Capt. Hawtree, for instance. He is the heavy swell of the English stage. Miss Ellen Terry, the sister of the celebrated Kate Terry, and Miss Hollingshead, are the ingenues in England. They are pretty, effective, and always handsomely received by their audiences. Miss Amy Roselle is another actress who is rapidly coming to the front by reason, first, of her beauty ; secondly, of her fine abilities. Miss Larkin resembles Mrs. Gilbert in her style of acting, and is about forty years of age.

GUSTAVUS V. BROOKE AND CHARLES MATTHEWS.

“By the way, there’s a picture of poor Gustavus Brooke, who went down at sea so bravely years ago. His great trouble was that he too often disappointed his managers, and you know what that means. As an actor he was perfectly brilliant, arriving at his effects in a most original manner. He was the imitator of no one I have ever seen ; had a school of his own and

followed it regardless of criticism. In short he was a magnetic actor.

“And look at that—a picture of Charles Matthews, —an old friend of mine. He was, undoubtedly, the founder of the present school of light comedy, and when he dies I know of no man who will take his place. His force consists in his excessive—well, I may call it his champagne airiness. Even at the present time, when he must be nearly seventy years old, he dashes on the stage with all the lightness and brilliancy of a lad of twenty. I never saw Charles Matthews attempt a serious part, and, in fact, there doesn’t seem to be one pathetic tone in his voice. Still I am sure that he would play a pathetic scene in a perfectly natural manner. He don’t know what it is to have low spirits.

“When imprisoned in Lancaster Castle for debt, with no probability of his being released for years, he was always as gay as a lark and occupied most of his time in painting water color sketches quite admirable in their character, the sale of which eventually enabled him to effect his release. Its rather an odd thing, by-the-by, but some of us actors naturally take to the brush. Joe Jefferson paints well, so does John Brougham, and when at leisure I pass many pleasant hours in sketching scenes with which I am familiar.

BUCKSTONE.

“Among the famous English actors is Tom Baldwin Buckstone, who must now be about seventy-five years of age ; but old as he is he gets hold of his audience more rapidly than any one I know. A simple ‘good morning’ from him seems to set the house in a roar. His personal magnetism is simply wonderful. I always stipulate when I play at the Haymarket, London, that Buckstone shall appear in the same piece with me. He is like old William Warren, of Boston, a perennial favorite. He acts as if he had strings on all of his fingers attached to the audience in front, and plays with them and pulls them about just as he wants. I think he has been on the stage about fifty-five years. During my connection with him of nearly fourteen years there has never been a scrap of paper between us. He is emphatically a man of his word. His theatre—the Haymarket—yields him a very handsome income from the production of light comedies and the appearance of stars like J. S. Clarke, Miss Neilson and others.”

INCIDENTS OF THE STAGE.

In response to a question by one of his guests concerning his experiences on the boards, Mr. Sothern

said : " I am glad you are inquisitive in that direction. I remember playing *Dundreary* one evening in London when the house was packed and there were thousands outside trying to get in. The police were obliged to line Haymarket on both sides in order to keep the carriage way open. A countryman and his wife occupied two front seats in the upper circle. In the middle of one of my soliloquies the wife said loudly during a pause in which I expected a roar of laughter, ' Weel, Jamie, I can see now't in't.' To which Jamie replied in an equally loud tone, ' Weel, domb'd ef I can ; come along, Sally.' The house fairly screamed at the remark, and at every interval some one would shout, ' Come along, Sally.'

" On another evening a man sat in the pit perfectly stolid through the first two acts. Suddenly he began to gurgle—you couldn't call it a laugh—but the people laughed at him to such an extent that he interfered with the play. I whispered to the prompter to send a policeman to remove the man. When the officer reached the spot he found a corpse. The man had literally laughed himself into apoplexy. Strangely enough, on that same night and at about the same hour—for we compared notes—while Boucicault was playing the '*Colleen Bawn*' at the Adelphi Theatre, a woman, under the influence of deep emotion, gave birth to a child and died before she could be removed. In one case it was death resulting from an excess of

humor, and in the other from the effect of strong pathos. This proves that comedy requires as much strength as its opposite in producing similar though diverse effects upon the imagination. In fact it is my belief that comedy requires even more intensity and magnetism than melodrama or tragedy, because in the one case the actor may find his effect created simply by the representation of a touching story, while in the other unless the performer by action fully illustrates the humor of an idea, the comedy fails to be appreciated and the magnetic power of his art is absent.

AUDIENCES AND ACTORS.

“What are your impressions concerning the plays of the present day and their effect?”

“That is rather a hard question to answer. Briefly, however, I think that we are passing through a period in which the people do not care for the higher order of plays and such bright thoughts as are to be found in the old comedies like ‘School for Scandal,’ &c. The modern audience seems to desire constant action, no matter how bad it may be, rather than sparkling dialogue such as is written by Gilbert and Byron, and the consequence is that dramatist, manager and actor are forced to recognize the momentary wants of an eccentric public.”

"To what do you think you principally owe your success on the stage?"

"Earnestness—doing everything as well as I know how—never acting on the impulse of the moment, and thoroughly understanding what I have to do. I owe much of my success to the elder Wallack and to Rachel. Wallack showed me the necessity of conveying at a rehearsal what you intend to do at night, and the importance of paying strict attention to the minutest detail. He was one of the most thorough stage managers I ever met. We were like a set of school-boys under discipline. We had to give a reason for everything, and therefore to study hard. With reference to Rachel, I left myself out of an engagement for six weeks, in order to see her play her celebrated characters. There was a fascination about her acting that was almost painful. She had less action than any artist I have ever seen, but she was so intensely in earnest, and her passion was so overwhelming, though subdued, that you lost yourself in wonderment. I learned from her, therefore, that one of the chief elements of whatever success I expected was earnestness, intensity, and thorough identification with every part in which I might be engaged. There is not an audience in the world which will not be quick to detect the sympathy between the actor and his play."

TEMPERAMENT AS AN ELEMENT OF SUCCESS.

"Don't you think, Mr. Sothern, that temperament has much to do with the success of actors and actresses?"

"Unquestionably so. I think that most of our first-class actors are painfully nervous, especially on the first two or three nights of a performance in which they may be specially interested. And my experience is, that people with this temperament are never fully satisfied with their labors. They are perpetually polishing, improving and reviewing. The very instant an actor is satisfied with his own work and believes himself to have reached the acme of cleverness, from that moment he begins to deteriorate. I am more nervous in going before an audience now than I was twenty years ago. During the first night of the 'Crushed Tragedian' in this city, Miss Ida Savory, with whom I was playing, told me she thought I was going to drop on the stage in a faint, and I thought so too, for my hands and feet were as cold as marble. This, however, is not an anomalous thing in the profession. I have seen one of the oldest and most distinguished actors on the English stage with his tongue so completely paralyzed for several seconds that he was obliged to wet his lips before he could deliver a line. Speaking of the 'Crushed Tragedian,' the transition

from Lord Dundreary to Fitz Altamont was so great that it commanded all my resolution to take the risk. Having made that reputation which is dear to every man, in 'Dundreary,' the attempt to create a character like the 'Crushed Tragedian' so utterly unlike any other I had ever played, was really a matter of fool-hardiness, and yet you see what I have done with it. It has run eighty-one nights at the Park Theatre, in New York, and filled that handsome place of entertainment nightly, when almost every other in the city was losing money. To make such a success after 'Dundreary' is like a man's coming out of a house on a summer's day expecting to be struck by lightning."

ANNOYANCES OF MANAGERS.

In the course of the desultory conversation which followed, and while commenting upon the annoyances to which managers are frequently subjected by reason of the ignorance of aspirants for Thespian honors, Mr. Sothern related the following incident: "I was playing," he said, "at the Theatre Royal, in 'Dundreary Married and Settled.' Among the company was a young fellow who, although undeniably well educated, and a thorough gentleman, had been obviously and expressly made not to be an actor. He had ruined two or three scenes with me in pieces which we had

previously performed, and I was forced to tell the stage manager particularly not to let him play Harry Vernon. The manager, however, who is an old friend of mine, begged me to give the young chap one more chance, because he still thought there might be something in him. I finally agreed, but remarked, 'You'll find there will be another *contretemps* and the mischief to pay.' The lines he had to utter when I gave him a certain cue, were as follows: 'That's a nice horse to lend a friend; I never could ride. I have broken both his knees. Where is Georgiana? Up stairs! Heave ahead!' This Harry Vernon was supposed to be a sailor, which accounts for the expression 'Heave ahead.' You can imagine the consternation of the whole of us, when, the time having arrived for him to 'go on,' he paid not the slightest attention to the cue, but in fact was listening at the key hole, apparently absorbed in his own meditations, and softly whistling to himself, 'Still so Gently O'er Me Stealing.' What to do I didn't know. I shrugged my shoulders and looked despairingly at the prompter, for there was a dead pause in the play that was embarrassing. The prompter, a quick-tempered man, rushed round to the door, and you can guess my feelings as the young fellow in an instant afterwards came half leaping, half falling on the stage as frightened and amazed as if he had been shot out of a catapult. The prompter couldn't resist the temptation of an inviting attitude and as

Harry Vernon stood bending over the key hole he received the full force of a heavy boot that accelerated his motion through the air. With a howl of agony the young amateur exclaimed: 'My God! What is that!' Not knowing the cause of this demonstration, I whispered to him, 'Come on, sir; come on! Quick!' Poor fellow, he had 'come on' with a vengeance; and this is what in the confusion of the moment he said: 'That's a nice girl to lend a friend; he never could ride. I have broken both her knees. Where is the horse! Up stairs! Heave her ahead.' That is one of the few times in my experience when I felt as if I had been shaken up by an earthquake. I needn't tell you that the ambitious individual immediately yielded up the ghost of any desire to continue the stage as a profession, and has since embraced the church."

UNREMEMBERED CUES.

"Among other curious incidents," remarked Mr. Sothern, "that have come under my observation in connection with anachronisms and unremembered cues, by actors, another occurs to me. A young lady was playing at the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, several years ago who, although a novice in acting, had a lovely voice of which she was proud, and always used it to her own advantage on the stage, even though the occasion was inopportune. At the time that I refer

to, she was cast in some melo-dramatic piece (I have forgotten the name), and made it a *sine qua non* that she should accompany herself on the piano. The director of the theatre being obliged to leave town on business, notified the stage manager that she was to introduce the song wherever she thought best. She was performing the part of a virgin pursued by brigands, when, in the midst of a tremendously dramatic scene, to the horror of everyone on the stage and behind the wings, she insisted on a piano being discovered in the wilds of a forest. She dashed on with her hair streaming down her back, and after a strong declamatory speech expressive of the idea that she wished she were back amongst her early friends, she exclaimed: 'Ah! I see that the brigands have left their piano in the woods, which reminds me of the song my brother taught me long, long ago.' Whereupon with a marvellous complaisance the young girl revolved upon the music stool and proceeded to sing 'Home, Sweet Home.' Fancy," said Mr. Sothern, "the feelings of that manager when he heard of this violation of 'the artistic unities.'

"At another time when Braham, the great English tenor, was in the zenith of his power, he played a melo-dramatic part in a London theatre. His last greatest success, 'The Sea, the Sea, the Open Sea,' had taken the metropolis by storm. In the course of one of the acts he was manacled hand and foot in a dreary cell, but it

was about the only place where he thought he could sing his favorite song, and he introduced it somewhat like this ; ‘Ah me ! such misery as I suffer ! Bound here a prisoner, and scarcely able to move. The more I look around these dingy walls the more they remind me of “the open sea.”’ This was the orchestra leader’s cue, and in an instant he had the instruments galloping through the prelude, whereupon Braham introduced in his own superb style, which few vocalists have been able to imitate, the well-known song. It was not until he had retired from the scene that he realized the absurdity of the situation, and was careful ever afterwards not to repeat the mistake.

“Another singular cue was given by a notorious artist, a part of whose duty it was to give ‘My Arab Steed,’ then an exceedingly popular song. Forgetting his lines, he dashed off with something like this:

‘Where, oh, where is my darling one?
I have hunted up stairs and down stairs
And in my lady’s chamber, but nowhere,
Alas, can I find “My Arab Steed,”’—

whereupon the leader, taking the cue, proceeded with the performance. Nobody but an actor can properly appreciate the horror that follows the discovery of these *contretemps* or realize the cold chills that chase each other down the vertebræ as one contemplates his ludicrous position and the possible effect upon a critical audience.”

"I'VE SWALLOWED THE FILE."

"There was another case, in which a good actor found himself put to his trumps to conquer a difficulty that could not have been foreseen. He was playing the part of a prisoner in a dungeon, and in order to make his escape, had secreted on his person a file nearly eighteen inches long. He had filed off his handcuffs and shackles, and was just about to leave, when the king's carbineers, overhearing the noise of his clanking chains, suddenly make their appearance at the iron lattice work of the dungeon door, and while pointing their muskets at him, the captain of the guard gives the order to 'Fire!' The triggers were pulled, but unfortunately the property-man had forgotten to put caps on the nipples of the guns. Of course there was no getting out of the difficulty except by suicide, and here is where the genius of the artist displayed itself. With a quick movement he thrust the long bit of iron in the direction of his throat, at the same instant performing a kind of conjuring trick, which caused it to disappear, and then melodramatically exclaimed: 'My God! I have swallowed the file!' He thereupon proceeded to die in great agony. The majority of the audience were not any the wiser, but the fellow might as well have said, 'I have swallowed Gramercy Park.'

"I don't know," continued Mr. Sothern, "that I have ever been so unfortunate—certainly not in late years—as to be caught in this way. In fact, I have never been successful in any piece in which I was not perfect in the words. For this reason, I always know what is going on about me ; what the actors are saying, or ought to say and do. I am therefore ready to prompt them whenever required. For myself, I rely entirely upon the magnetism of the audience, and its influence upon an acutely nervous system, for the production of effects which frequently are as novel and startling to my brother actors as they are to myself. This is especially true of my part of Fitz Altamont, in the 'Crushed Tragedian,' where I have occasionally lost my identity so completely that, to the amazement of the people on the stage and those nearest to it, I have commenced to rant in an undertone in a style that would have made the Bowery gods yell had it been uttered by Richard III. on 'Bosworth's gory field.' I don't think I am alone in this peculiarity, though it is a decidedly bad one for any man to possess."

Some one suggested, at this juncture, that possibly a disposition to improvise language, and say bright things on the spur of the moment, was inherent in members of the profession, especially to those who are independent of the trammels of their surroundings, and of mere stage art.

“Perhaps it is so,” rejoined Mr. S., “to a certain extent; but it is the exception rather than the rule, and is at best a dangerous experiment.”

AN EXPERIENCE WITH “BROTHER PROFESSIONALS.”

“Talking about actors, there is a celebrated festival in Birmingham which is known as the Onion Fair. I had my children with me during a visit to the place while engaged at the Theatre Royal in that city, and about 12 o'clock one day we all strolled through the fair to witness the usual sights on such occasions—the fat women, living skeletons, calves with six legs, Punch and Judy, imitations of Richardson's Show, &c. In these theatrical performances they condense Shakspearian plays in the most frightful manner and rattle through the plot of tragedy in about twenty minutes. When the door opens the audience make their exit and a fresh crowd is introduced. Reserved seats are held at ‘tuppence.’ We paid our admission fee and were assigned places on the front row, which consisted of a dirty wooden bench. We were scarcely warm in our seats, however, when the proprietor of the show walked up to me, took off his hat in a very obsequious manner, returned my money and remarked: ‘We never charge our brother professionals.’ I looked at him in astonishment, and didn't know precisely what the fellow was

driving at ; but a few minutes afterwards I heard it posted all through the establishment : 'That's Lord Dundreary.' A good many people evidently thought that I was a real nobleman, and doubtless but few were aware that the name only represented the character I was acting. The play on the boards at the time was 'Hamlet.' Just as the curtain was about to fall, Hamlet, the king, and the ghost walked down two or three wooden steps from the stage, approached, and shaking me by the hand, said that they recognized me, and would like the honor of drinking the health of Lord Dundreary. Of course it was a predicament that I was obliged to accept and from which I couldn't escape. The tenpence I held in my hand was obviously too little with which to 'tip' these ambitious actors, and the only other coin about me was a sovereign. This I handed to the ghost. They immediately proceeded to give three cheers for Dundreary, the unusual liberality was announced to the audience from the stage, the band struck up 'Should Old Acquaintance be Forgot,' and we were accompanied by howls of admiration from a large mob until we arrived at our hotel. I'm very sure you don't have any such 'Brother professionals' in this country.

STUDIES FROM LIFE.

"One of the pastimes which I occasionally enjoy is

that of studying idiosyncrasies of character. Sometimes I have spent days and weeks in following and observing men whose eccentricities of dress or manner struck me as unique and suggestive. It's curious, too, how much one becomes interested in these subjects, artistically, I mean, and how a thought thus created grows upon you and enlarges until at last you have secured a new, well-developed character around which cluster any number of possible stage effects. Speaking of this, I have a friend, a physician, on whom this kind of intellectual entertainment or association, according to his own statement, produced a singular influence. He told me that years ago, he was a medical attendant in an insane asylum, and while treating the patients and listening to their wild vagaries, he found himself drifting unconsciously into the same channels, his sleep disturbed by strange dreams, and his whole nature absorbed in the contemplation of the mad world. Insanity seemed to follow him like a nightmare, until at last, finding that his mind was likely to become more or less sympathetically affected, he determined to sacrifice his salary, retire from the institution, and commence the ordinary practice of medicine. He says that if he had remained in the asylum six months longer he would have been as crazy as any of his patients. The truth is, once a fixed idea gets into a man's mind, it is the beginning of insanity. The rest is only a question of time."

"Is it not true, Mr. Sothern, that all of the artists in your profession, who have achieved success, have made these life studies?"

"I think it is, without exception. Forrest was a very close observer; Joe Jefferson, William J. Florence, John McCullough, John Owens, John T. Raymond, J. S. Clarke, the Booths, in fact all who illustrate strong character, have taken their studies directly from nature. You might as well expect Landseer to paint one of his magnificent dogs with life-like fidelity, or Bierstadt to portray the glorious scenery of the Rocky Mountains or the Yosemite Valley, without having taken lessons on the spot; or McDonald or Ward, the sculptors, to represent the human form divine, without a perfect knowledge of anatomy, and constant study from the living nude figure, as to find a successful actor who has not in a similar way taken his subject directly from life. It's a grand sight to see these workers, with the pencil and chisel, going out to consult nature. Bradford, for instance, will spend months around the Arctic circle, among icebergs, walruses and bears, in order to transfer to his canvas those northern scenes. Church goes to the tropics to watch the sunshine and the clouds, and bring back the gorgeous tints and glorious foliage that make his pictures great. Fancy young Munger sitting in front of his portfolio among the solitudes of the West, and drawing the scene before

him, with a couple of grizzly bears feeding under a tree not a hundred yards away. A friend of mine told me that when he saw Munger in his New York studio after his return, putting the subject on canvas he said to him, 'Why, Gil, are you painting these bears from imagination merely?' 'From imagination! No;' said the artist, 'that was an actual part of my experience. I happened to be at work when those two grizzlies came loitering about just as you see them in the picture there, and I thought it was a splendid opportunity to work them in.' 'But weren't you afraid of them?' said my friend. 'No; why should I be? They were satisfying their hunger in another way, and I knew that under the circumstances unless they were interfered with they would not interfere with me.' Now, that is what I call the pursuit of art under difficulties—genuine enthusiasm. Artist or actor, however, it's all the same."

A REMINISCENCE OF JEM WARD, THE PUGILIST.

"Right here I can give you a curious instance in my own experience. Several years ago I was a pupil of Jem Ward, the celebrated pugilist, who taught me all I know about 'the noble art of self-defence.' When I went to London, and while playing Dunderary, I found Jem in a state of great destitution. For an uneducated man he was a remarkably clever



DAVID GARRICK.

one, and possessed not a little real artistic ability which, had it been cultivated, might have made a name for him in a higher sphere. He used to paint copies of original pictures, and was especially fond of the water colors of Turner. Many of these copies were wonderfully bold and brilliant, though they showed a lack of culture that made them comparatively valueless. As I was saying, when I returned to London the old man hunted me up and told me his circumstances. I aided him in a small way, and eventually he secured a little public house in White-chapel. Watts Phillips, at my suggestion, had written for me a piece, in which I was to play the part of a burglar, and in order to get myself well up in the character, almost every night after the performance at the Haymarket, I used to visit the neighborhood frequented by this class of people. Among the haunts was the place of Jem Ward, known as the 'Little Public.' After one or two appearances there, however, Ward begged me never to come again in my own brougham, and never to bring money or jewelry, but to keep up a running account with him and treat the fellows right and left to nothing more expensive than beer or gin. He told me that the very cabs that took me home were owned by burglars, and thieves, and for several nights he accompanied me until we reached the Haymarket theatre where I secured my own conveyance and went to my resi-

dence at Kensington. I was thus more or less mixed up with many of the celebrated cracksmen, robbers of various grades, swell-mobsmen, and I suppose murderers, but would you believe it, I never met with the slightest originality of idea in any one of them. True, there was much that was coarse, and there were characteristics of manner and dress which did not escape my observation, but, so far as I am aware, that episode in my experience was of no practical artistic benefit. Dickens, with his extraordinary pen has more correctly depicted in his character of *Bill Sykes* the imaginary burglar, than probably will ever be done again, but the reality don't exist. I was struck by the fact during my association with those people that every person I met at Ward's had himself been a student of Charles Dickens and copied his ideal in his own rough and tumble way. I suppose the fellows liked the romance of the description and got themselves up accordingly."

"But you won't deny that Dickens himself made this class a study, and that he spent nights and days, weeks and months in pursuing his investigations?"

"That's true; but Boz mixed such a vast amount of poetry with the portrayal of these rough subjects, that he robbed them of their real deformity and made his ideals a great deal better than the

originals. In other words, his subjects were overdrawn. You might say almost the same thing about Landseer, for while he painted his animals from life, the sympathy and poetry of the man's nature are illustrated in eyes and general characteristics that are almost human in their expression—another instance of exaggeration. The same is true of the Beards, of New York."

PERSONAL TRAITS.

"Referring to personal idiosyncrasies concerning which we were talking a few moments ago," remarked a gentleman, "I have observed quite a number of traits about you that strike me as somewhat peculiar. For instance, I perceive that while you are surrounded here with beautiful birds, you evidently don't hear them sing; while engaged in conversation a rap on the door makes you nervous, and you say some of your best things while walking up and down the room with a cigar in your mouth."

"That is true; and there are other things that might strike you as equally odd. For example, I can't endure a scent in the room. I love birds, animals, pets of all kinds, but take me away from a perfume. In my dancing days when the girls were

covered with *eau de Cologne* they simply made me sick, and time and again I have refused to dance for this reason. I suppose it is an hereditary trait. My sister could not bear the sight of grapes; I can't endure the smell of cheese; it is something frightful to me, and if I can find an excuse for leaving a table where it is, I always do so. You can't account for these things any more than for the conformation of a man's skull."

IMPRESSIONS OF AMERICA.

"What is your general impression of the people of America, or rather, what portion of the people do you like best?"

"For that matter," replied Mr. Sothern, "I admire them all. The hospitality of the country is something wonderful. It is free, unstinted, generous, and unselfish—and true equally of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, San Francisco; in fact I can't mention any large city which I have visited where club life and home life are not full of social interest and warmth of feeling. One of the characteristics of the American, however, which I have particularly noticed, is his utter want of repose. In his business office, in the ball room, at the dinner party, everywhere, he looks as if never quite satisfied with the present, and continually

anticipating something that has to be done on the morrow. Unlike the German, he is always anxious even after the accumulation of wealth, to acquire more. He never says 'I have enough.' There are other peculiar traits which I have observed indicative of a strong local individuality. In Boston they measure a man by his literary attainments; in New York by his wealth; in Philadelphia by his religious opinions; in Baltimore and Norfolk by his love of good living, especially oysters; in Washington by his politics; in Richmond and Charleston by the antiquity of his family tree; in New Orleans by his admiration for gumbo; and in San Francisco by the number of shares he owns in the big bonanzas."

"Don't you owe much of your success to your adaptability to these several conditions of society?"

"Perhaps so. Any country is a man's home who carries with him a contented disposition. For this reason, it is all the same to me whether I am in New York or the Feejee Islands. If I have work to do I can be happy. I am not naturally, however, of a roving disposition. In youth I was regarded as remarkably quiet, but by the strangest of coincidences—things which I can't explain—I have been thrown into a groove from which it seems impossible to extricate myself. Action has become chronic. I must be always doing something

Doubtless it is due to an intensely nervous disposition which I have inherited from both my father and mother. Like the gout, it is in the blood ; hence the extreme sensitiveness to slight influences which is familiar to many of my intimate friends. A color on the wall, a picture hung awry, a room full of disorder without apparent cause, in fact a thousand trifles which affect nobody else, produce in me the most disagreeable of sensations."

EXPERIENCE IN NOVA SCOTIA.

"I have heard some one speak of your experience in Nova Scotia ; what about that, Mr. Sothern ?"

"Oh, nothing," was the reply, "a mere episode, such as might have occurred in the career of any actor. A number of us went from New York—among them genial John T. Raymond, by the way—some years ago, during our summer vacation, and I agreed to pay each a small salary sufficient to cover their ordinary hotel expenses. We hired a barn, scattered some sawdust on the floor, secured a lot of benches from a neighboring church and erected a small platform which was lighted by candles. We produced some of the most sterling plays, coined money, for it had been nearly a generation since the people of the neighborhood had seen anything in the shape of a regular

dramatic performance, and had a lot of original fun generally. Strange to say we were deceived by the extraordinary luck we had run against, and I built a neat, cheap wooden structure suitable for theatrical purposes, and subsequently repeated some of the performances, but it was a failure—didn't repay the outlay, and so we abandoned it. The fact is the audience had been 'played out.'"

AN ABSENT-MINDED ACTOR.

"Sothorn," says John T. Raymond (better known, perhaps, as Col. Mulberry Sellers), "is at times very absent-minded. I remember that we were once going to Halifax. Both of us suffered frightfully from seasickness, especially Ned. We occupied the same state-room, and Ned the lower shelf, spending about half the time on his elbow agonizingly investigating that small tin concern, which they hang on the edge of your berth. He wanted something but hadn't the slightest idea what to call it.

" 'Describe it,' said I, from my perch on the upper tier.

" 'Oh, don't make me talk, John—I'm—so—sick ; but its a round thing—small at both ends.'

" 'Is it a banana ?' I meekly inquired.

" 'Ugh,—no, no,' almost howled Ned—'it's got juice in it.'

“‘An egg?’ said I.

“‘No,’ (emphatically) said he.

“‘An orange?’ I suggested.

“‘No, no, don’t any idiot know that an orange hasn’t a point at both ends?’

“‘Perhaps you mean a lump of ice, and you want to suck the juice out of that.’

“‘No, you infernal fool—I don’t want to do any such ridiculous thing.’

“I now desperately commenced to catalogue everything I could think of—apples, peaches, apricots, pecan nuts, cucumbers, at all of which Ned roared and raved like a maniac.

“Finally, the happy thought struck me—‘is it a lemon?’ said I. ‘That’s moist.’

“‘Yes,’ said he. ‘Why the d—l didn’t you say lemon first? Now ring for the steward, let’s have a box of them; and do you shut up.’

AN ACTOR’S APOLOGY.

“One night while at Halifax,” continued Mr. Raymond, “it was arranged that I should receive a benefit. Rheumatism had afflicted me so much that for a long time I had been unable to act, but on the evening in question I was comparatively all right. The play announced was ‘The Corsican Brothers,’ in which Sothern was to appear as one of the ‘twins.’ After this per-

formance I was to recite a fireman's address in the presence of the fire department. It turned out that Sothern, for some reason, hadn't prepared himself for the part—though I think the fellow was shamming—and it was suggested that I should go before the curtain and make an apology for the default, pleading my illness as an excuse.

“‘Wrap yourself in a blanket,’ said Ned, ‘put on some list shoes, whiten your face with a little chalk to make yourself look delicate, and in a feeble voice tell the people how ill you’ve been. That will settle the whole thing.’

“I followed Ned’s suggestion to the letter, and went down to the footlights and spoke my little speech, as dilapidated a specimen of mortality as ever made himself up to fill a dramatic dilemma, concluding with the remark that if the audience would excuse me, Mr. Sothern would play ‘The Little Treasure,’ and in due time I would fulfill my promise concerning the fireman’s address.

“The pit called out: ‘All right, provided you’ll give us “Whack.”’ This was the name of a song that had become a favorite, and I was glad enough to get off so easily.

“Sothern played his ‘Little Treasure,’ and the time arrived for the ‘Address.’ Forgetting my personal appearance, however, in the *role* of an apologist, I rushed on the stage in a full dress suit, split-pen coat,

white necktie, white kids, etc., with all the buoyancy of a twenty-year-old boy. Looking across the stage, who should I see but Ned, doubled up between the wings and howling with delight? The audience saw my predicament in an instant, and began to shout and laugh. I was 'struck all in a heap,' as the saying is, with my mouth wide open; couldn't remember a line, and I walked off the stage making an ass of myself.

"Sothorn says, 'you ought to have carried your slippers and blanket in your hand, to prove that you had them.' You see, I failed to preserve the consistency of the imposition, and I never had the heart to appear there again.

SOLD BY A WAITER.

"Among our many 'larks' in the provinces," said Mr. Raymond, "I remember one in which all of us were badly 'sold.' We were in the habit of driving out to lunch about ten miles from Halifax, and from the very beginning of our excursions, had agreed to call each other by some high sounding title, as, for instance, 'Lord Edward,' 'Sir John,' and 'Colonel So-and-So.' The head waiter dropped into the joke, and as we 'tipped' him liberally, not only addressed us by these titles, but kept what we supposed was our secret. To carry out the idea, we were in the habit of making up a pool, at the end of each visit, to

give to our own particular waiter—a very intelligent Irishman, by the way, and somewhat ostentatious, otherwise we never should have thought of it. He was not only entertaining, and flattered us by giving to each the benefit of our assumed honors, but on each occasion had some fresh and harrowing story to tell about his lame mother, or sick sister, or a family of suffering children, the result of which was an extra present from our individual purses. As we parted with him on leaving Halifax, you can fancy our astonishment when our waiter, with a quiet smile on his face, said :

“ ‘ Well, Mr. Sothern and Mr. Raymond, ye frequently play yer parts on the stage—I’ve played mine here. Thank ye for yer kindness, and I hope you’ve enjoyed yerselves. Come again, and I’ll trate you twice as well the nixt time.’ ”

“ ‘ But how about your lame mother and the other hospital inmates of your family ?’ inquired Ned.

“ ‘ Ah, yer honor,’ said the fellow, with a sly wink, ‘ that was the price of yer honors’ titles, you know.’ ”

“ He had given us ‘ a Roland for our Oliver.’ ”

TAKING DOWN A COLONEL.

“ We went to St. John’s, N. B., three summers, and played in a barn that Harry Isherwood, the scenic artist, who was of our party, had secured and fitted up

in a way that was at least habitable. A very swell regiment was stationed there, with most of the officers of which Sothern became a great favorite. The colonel was a martinet—just that kind of person that Ned heartily despises. One evening when we had a crowded house—it was the benefit of Miss Mestayer, I think—this colonel came round to the door, and demanded of Sothern an entrance—demanded it, mark you, in an imperious tone, as if he owned the place.

“‘Who are you?’ said Ned, indignantly.

“‘I am Colonel ——, of Her Majesty’s —th.’

“‘Well, sir,’ replied Ned, ‘if you were the Grand Mogul with three tails, you would get no favors here until you ask for them like a gentleman.’

“The consequence was a quarrel, but Sothern behaved so handsomely through it all, and enforced his rights in such a manly way that he won the sympathy of the entire regiment, and the colonel at last backed down and apologized.

SAVING THE CITY OF HALIFAX.

“During our stay in Halifax, a powder magazine, or something of the kind, situated two or three miles from the city, exploded one night between eleven and twelve o’clock. Most of the inhabitants had retired; but Sothern, John Dyott and myself, having just returned from the theatre, were taking lunch. The

whole town was shaken to the center, and for the moment no one knew whether it was an earthquake or some other strange phenomenon. Of course everybody rushed into the streets, a great number only partially dressed, to ascertain if possible what was the cause of the commotion. When our party reached the pavement, we saw what seemed to be a tall, narrow, dense black cloud moving in the direction of the city, and apparently but a few hundred yards distant.

"In the house adjoining the hotel resided an old gentleman who, like others, had come out to view the spectacle, but who had evidently jumped from his bed in a hurry and left everything behind. There he stood in his long night shirt, bare-footed, tangled haired, and as comical a looking sight as you ever saw.

"The moment Ned's eyes rested on him, he exclaimed, *sotto voce*: 'Boys, let's have some fun!' and then quickly turning to the gentleman, he remarked in his quick nervous way:—

"'This is terrible, sir, terrible, isn't it—everybody excited—nobody cool—you're an old citizen—let's try to save the town; now you run on one side of the cloud and I'll run on the other—wake the people up, and shout "fire!"'

"With that Ned darted off at a run, and the old man in his long night shirt followed at the top of his speed, with a pack of men and boys yelling like mad

helter-skelter at his heels, and not a soul of them knowing what had happened.

“After going a short distance Ned found a convenient corner where he turned and made his way back to the hotel, blowing like a porpoise, but in high glee at the success of his ruse. He said he left his friend travelling like a nightmare. The next morning we heard that he had run for nearly a mile when somebody stopped him as an escaped lunatic, and brought him home.

“Sothern had to keep out of the way during the rest of our engagement, for the old fellow was after him with a club.”

A GLASGOW SUPPER PARTY.

“Did I ever tell you,” said Mr. Sothern, one evening, “about a certain supper in Glasgow? It was one of those late affairs which sometimes occur after theatre hours, and I had around me a number of excellent friends and *bon vivants*, among whom was a professor of the Glasgow College, several barristers and two or three army men. This professor was a singularly clever and honest fellow, but he had a peculiar way of leaving a company, very frequently without saying good-bye to any person present. It was a pure matter of politeness on his part, however, because, having duties to per-

form either on his own account or that of others, he didn't choose to make a feature of his departure, and so disturb the remainder of the guests. One of the officers was Major —, I won't mention his name—a splendid specimen of a bluff, honest-spoken old English gentleman. In the course of the conversation at the table he remarked: 'I went to see the world-famed conjurer, Professor — to-night, and what a pity it is that he should go on the stage in such a shameful condition!' I asked him what was the matter. 'Why,' said he, 'he was drunk, sir, disgracefully drunk.' It occurred to me at this instant that here was a superb chance to make some fun, for I knew the major was not acquainted with our eccentric guest, the professor from the Glasgow College. Therefore, in the most accidental manner, crossing my knees I managed to touch the major on the leg and at the same time softly 'sh-sh-sh.' He turned around quickly, looked at me, and became very red in the face, evidently taking a hint, the reason of which he didn't comprehend. I saw at once that he was in a mental muddle, and winking in a suggestive manner as much as to say 'look out for yourself,' remarked: *soto voce*, 'My dear sir; you've made a mistake. You surely don't mean he was drunk?' 'No, no,' he replied in a disconcerted sort of way, 'not exactly drunk, but—but—rather confused, you understand. I've seen

a good many of the English jugglers, and I don't consider him as good as several whom I know.'

"At this juncture the professor took his hat and walked out, which we, who knew him, recognized as his quiet way of absenting himself without going through the formula of breaking up a social party. You see he had his lecture to prepare for the next day, and we of the club being aware of that fact, paid no attention to his exit. When the professor was fairly out of hearing I observed to the major, 'This is a nice mess that you've made.' 'What is it? What did I say?' he inquired anxiously. 'Why,' said I, 'didn't you see the indignant way in which he got up and left the room. That's the son-in-law of the conjuror—married his daughter only two days ago, and of course he feels naturally indignant at the remark which he heard you make.' 'D——n it,' said the major, 'why didn't you tell me? You kicked me and you confused me.' 'Nonsense,' I replied, 'I looked at you and winked at you, and shoo-ed at you, and tried to stop you as an intelligent being capable of taking a hint.' 'Oh, well, well, well, who the devil could follow a wink like that? But what am I going to do about it?' I suggested that he should write the professor a nice letter, inasmuch as he was a man of great personal position, and explain the affair in a semi-apologetic way, stating that he was a trifle under the influence of wine, etc. Thereupon the major went to my desk,

and at my dictation scribbled off a note and properly addressed it. 'Now,' I said, 'I will send this by my own servant, so that there shall be no miscarriage.' Of course I didn't send it at all; but the next day I wrote a letter and had it copied and signed in the professor's name, which was one of the most grossly insulting in its character that I could conceive of. It read something like this: 'Simply because you happen to be a cavalry officer and I a quiet university professor, you think you can insult me by assailing the purity of my father-in-law. As you yourself confess, you are only a drunken cad,' etc., etc. The major came the next morning fearfully out of sorts, and showed me the letter. 'What do you think of that?' said he, excitedly. 'D——n the professor of humanity! He calls me a drunken cad.' I replied: 'Oh, that's only his classical method of expression.' 'By Jove! I don't care for that. I'll go and kick him out of his lecture room.' I soothed the major as well as I knew how, and as soon as he was gone, sat down and wrote a note to the other professor—the conjuror—in the name of Major So-and-So, to the effect that he had received a letter from his son-in-law saying that he would cowhide him at the first opportunity. That brought another communication still more mixing up matters. Of course you understand that I wrote all these myself, consequently held the trump cards in my own hand.

“These letters went backwards and forwards for several days. Finally, I sent one from the professor challenging the major, and at the same time caused a number of telegraphic messages to be transmitted from different parts of Scotland from men with whom I knew he was intimate, expressive of their astonishment that a gentleman so well known for his high courage, should have been guilty of conduct so utterly unbecoming his position. Now the major was a man of warm temperament, who, in by-gone days, in India and elsewhere, had been fighting duels about once a week, although such a piece of absurdity, at the present hour, would have resulted in his being cashiered. As a consequence, he was thrown into a state of extreme excitement and perplexity. Just about this time I started for London, leaving behind me a batch of letters and telegrams, to be sent to the major on the following day. They were of the most slighting and insulting description. Rendered utterly desperate by these, he followed me to London, sending me a telegram in advance, saying that he desired to act on my advice in the premises, and would meet me at a given hour for consultation. I then arranged it to have the professor from Glasgow dine with me the very day the major was to call. As the latter walked into the room he was completely staggered when the professor advanced and shook him by the hand in the most cordial and amicable manner. Of course the

major couldn't resist what he now regarded as an evidence of good will, and commenced to make explanations. The professor listened in astonishment, and declared his entire innocence of the whole affair. Not having the ghost of an idea what it was all about, he thought the major was drunk; and as I kept making signs to him, he treated him accordingly. The whole thing was so ludicrous that at last we all of us burst into a hearty, good-natured laugh, which was redoubled when I told the whole story. I ought to say, that I never would have indulged in this little joke had it not been that the major, some weeks previously, had got me into comparative trouble by a practical joke of his own, of which I was the victim. My revenge was natural and most complete."

AN AMATEUR VENTRILOQUIST.

"I think that one of the most reckless affairs with which I have ever had to do," continued the narrator, "occurred at the house of a friend of mine who was himself fond of a joke, and had at home abundant opportunity for the making of one. A regiment had just arrived from the Crimean war, and was forwarded to Glasgow to be quartered there. My friend asked the officers to dine immediately after their arrival, although he was a stranger to them all except by reputation. He invited me

to go with him, remarking : ‘ Now, Ned, let us have some fun,’ and we at once concocted a plan. I knew his residence very well and could do anything I pleased in it. With his leave I sent for a stone mason and told him to ascertain where the flue from the fire grate made its exit on the roof, as I wanted him that night during the dinner to call down the chimney in answer to any question I might ask. My friend, the host, meanwhile, was to introduce me to his guests as a celebrated American ventriloquist who was about to appear in London, and was acknowledged to be the most extraordinary artist of the kind in the world. While the meal was going on Colonel Harris, a very aristocratic old man, though rather pompous, gradually began to throw out suggestions and to lead conversation in the direction of ventriloquial subjects. I, of course, pretended to be very bashful, and to avoid any allusion to the theme. After much solicitation however, I consented to speak as he said, only two or three words. Mark you I had timed the experiment so that it should be exactly eight o’clock, or within a few minutes of it, when I knew that my mason would be keeping his engagement at the other end of the chimney. Going to the fire-place I shouted at the top of my voice, for it was a deuced long way up, ‘ Are you there ? ’ but there was no response. I came to the con-

clusion that as by this time it was raining very hard, the stone mason had got sick of the whole business and left the roof. Imagine my surprise when in eight or ten seconds afterwards, just as I had turned and was going to tell the colonel that my failure was due entirely to an ulcerated sore throat, a deep voice was heard hallooing down the flue: 'I don't hear a d——d word!' The colonel, officers, and all the guests looked perfectly staggered. I immediately took advantage of the situation and remarked: 'There, you see how badly I did! You notice what a guttural tone there was in my voice;' but they all crowded around me and said it was the most extraordinary thing they ever heard in their lives, and begged me to repeat the experiment. I had previously made the arrangement with the mason that when I said 'good-bye' three times, he would understand that I would require him no more. I therefore shouted out 'good-bye' three times, and getting no response concluded that he had gone, and thought no more about the matter. About an hour after this, the colonel was leaning against the mantel-piece, smoking a cigar, when he turned to me—I was on the opposite side of the room—and said: 'Col. Slayter,' (by which name I had been introduced to the company), 'I have no hesitation in saying that you are the most extraordinary ventriloquist alive. Now, in

my own little way I occasionally try to amuse my children in the same manner, but it is really absurd after the wonderful effect you have produced, to give you an illustration here; still I will try. For instance, when at home I sometimes put my head up the chimney and shout: 'Are you coming down?' and the old gentleman accompanied the action to the words. Judge of our utter amazement when a yell was heard in the chimney, 'Oh, go to the devil! I have had enough of this.' It so happened that I was chatting with a number of the officers at the moment, and the colonel almost reeled up against the table in his astonishment at such an unexpected reply. Everybody looked at him as if for an explanation. Taking in the situation quickly and carelessly stepping forward, I said: 'There, gentlemen, that is my last effort. I am suffering so much from bronchial affection that you must really excuse me from any further exhibition.' One and all of them gathered around me and again wrung my hands expressing their amazement at the high art I had evinced, and promised me a magnificent reception whenever I should appear in public. It was as much as I and my friend could do to preserve serious faces. The joke was too good to keep long, and in a little while afterwards in the course of conversation, the host said, 'By the way, Sothern, do you remember so and so?' 'What!' said all the officers, looking up, 'Sothern! I thought this was Col. Slayter.'

‘Oh, no,’ replied my friend, ‘that’s *Lord Dundreary*.’ The result was a joke out and half a dozen rounds of champagne in. That was my first and last experience as a ventriloquist.

A JOKE ON HIS MANAGER.

“Two or three weeks ago, Mr. Henry E. Abbey, my manager, and I had a small wager about the nightly increase and decline of our audiences. He finally owed me a couple of silk hats, and wrote an order on one of the principal merchants here, asking that they should be sent to him at the box office of the Park Theatre. In his loose way of writing, he had left a blank space before the number 2, and when his back was turned, I quickly put a ‘6’ in the gap. The letter was folded and mailed, and in the course of time, perplexed as the hatter must have been by this extraordinary requirement on the part of Mr. Abbey, the sixty-two hats were sent down to the theatre, together with a bill, and a letter expressing his astonishment at such a large order. Mr. Abbey was in an adjoining apartment when the hats arrived, and you can conceive his amazement on finding that he literally could not get into the box office, as there was only just room enough for treasurer Tilotson and the sixty-two hat boxes. The boy who accompanied the hats also brought Mr. Abbey’s order, which was writ-

ten in pencil. I was on the look-out, and before the lad entered the vestibule, I had taken the letter from him and quietly rubbed out my original 6, so that Abbey received and read the order just as he had written it; that is to say, for two hats. He showed it to me, and I read it aloud as innocently as I am now talking to you.

“Said he: ‘What the devil does Mr. — mean by sending me sixty-two hats, when this order only calls for two!’

“I replied: ‘Poor fellow! He must be at it again.’

“‘What do you mean?’ said he.

“‘Oh, it only shows what drink will do, if a man persists in it. You had better send the hats back, with some gentle advice concerning his habits, and pay your bill.’

“They were thereupon immediately returned to the store, with a sharp letter from the manager. A correspondence followed which, I think, was not definitely explained to the satisfaction of either party until I told the story on Abbey, the other night, at Delmonico’s.

AUTOGRAPH HUNTERS.

“During my stay in London I used to receive hundreds of communications weekly, not only from beg-

ging letter-writers, but from people who made it a business to collect autographs for the purpose of selling them. They were a terrible nuisance to me, and I finally abandoned all attempts to reply to them. In lieu of a written response, however, I had some hundreds of peculiar envelopes made with the following head line printed in scarlet ink on the back : 'Curious specimens of contagious bedding,' and in these envelopes my valet was instructed to place little pieces of cotton batting and to address them to people who were boring me with their requests. From what I afterwards heard it is impossible to convey an idea of the annoyance which this vague sort of reply occasioned. The clerks in the post-office could not refuse to receive them, nor could the postman refuse to deliver them. The servants of the houses at which they were delivered were obliged to take them in, and the people to whom they were addressed were in the majority of instances curious enough to desire to see the contents. Inside the envelope was written, 'with Mr. Sothern's compliments.' I received a good many insulting letters in response to this style of dealing with the begging public, but my object was effected in largely diminishing a very obnoxious correspondence.

THE ART OF FLYING.

"One of the oddest experiences of my New York

life," said Mr. Sothern, "was an attempt to drag me into an absurd joke, of which I pledge you—not exactly my honor—but my purse, that I have but a very remote knowledge. Florence and I were one day talking about the folly of people in acting like a flock of sheep who follow the example of their leader. See a man look upward and he will gather a crowd. Let him hunt for a supposititious something, and scores of people will assemble to aid him in the search. Florence concluded, by way of illustration, to try his hand in a higher sphere, and so selected as the field of his exploits Trinity Church, which, as you are aware, has one of the tallest spires in the city. My first intimation that he had laid his plans, was the publication of the following circular—

“ ‘THE ART OF FLYING.

“ ‘Professor Cantell A. Biglie, of the scientific school of Wisconsin university, has the honor to inform the public that he will give an exhibition of his completed apparatus, for navigating the air, on Wednesday afternoon, the 9th inst., at three o'clock, precisely, in the vicinity of Trinity Church. The professor proposes to fly from house to house across Broadway, at angles, then from Trinity to Bowling Green and return; and will ascend as high as the summit of Trinity steeple, and hover a few hours in that vicinity. An opportunity will be given after



BROTHER SAM.

the exhibition to examine the apparatus. The people are respectfully invited.'

"Such, in brief, was the bait offered, and it was greedily swallowed. At half-past twelve on the day in question, a little knot of people had gathered close to the churchyard railings; at one o'clock the pavement was in a measure obstructed. At two the tide overflowed into the street, and by three, P. M., the advertised hour of exhibition, the whole breadth of Broadway was occupied by a densely packed and struggling mass of humanity, whilst in addition to the rush of the main artery, both Wall and Pine streets contributed steady contingents to the already swollen crowd. As the church clock clanged forth the hour anxious eyes were turned upwards, but as yet the professor 'gave no sign;' the quarter next sounded, and still the old steeple bore every aspect of being untenanted, whilst amongst the keener spirits in the crowd a horrible suspicion commenced to dawn, that the whole thing was a '*sell*.' The suspicion speedily became a certainty, and with wild yells the '*sold*' rushed into the churchyard and endeavored to force their way into the steeple. It was a queer sight. Respectable family men, Wall street brokers and quiet individuals, who would not for the life of them have been mixed up in a 'mob riot' were unwillingly carried into the churchyard, in spite of their frantic gesticulations, many of them hatless. The sexton, how-

ever, was equal to the occasion, and the solid door resisted all attacks, although again and again renewed. Wearied at length by fruitless effort the mob now slowly dispersed, the sacred edifice was left in its normal state of quietude, and then from the safe shelter afforded by the stately tomb erected to the memory of Captain Lawrence, the sailor hero, three figures stealthily crept, bearing a wondrous resemblance to Sothern, Florence, and John M'Cullough. In the first instance," proceeded Sothern, as he recited the story, "the fancied resemblance was a most unfortunate one, for it attracted the argus eye of a member of the reportorial staff of the *New York Herald*, who at once proceeded to fix the authorship of this outrageous practical joke upon your humble servant. In the next issue of the paper, to my amazement, the following letter appeared, purporting to be signed by myself :

"GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL, Thursday, Noon.

"*To the Editor of the Herald :*

"Will you kindly state that I am not responsible for the 'Flying Hoax' at Trinity Church on Wednesday last. Believing, with Washington, that it is wrong to tell a story, I will simply state that Florence did it.

Yours, &c., E. A. SOTHERN.

"This forged disclaimer at once set a reporter on Florence's track, and on his arrival at the wretched Billy's 'diggings,' something like the following conversation ensued :

“REPORTER.—I have a letter here from Sothern, charging you with the authorship of the ‘Trinity Church sell.’

“BILLY.—I give you my word of honor, sir, that I know nothing of the matter. It is another atrocious joke of Sothern’s. I say, Palmer (again examining the letter), that looks very like my handwriting, doesn’t it? Sothern has imitated it, that’s evident (with resignation). What a ruffian he is! Why, he gave me his word that he would not perpetrate any more practical jokes, and now, here he is, trying to get me into another scrape. Blood *must* yet be shed!

“REPORTER.—Do you really think Buggins had anything to do with it?”

“BILLY (hopelessly).—Well, he *may* have helped; but it was only the other day Sothern sent three tons of coal to my house, in Park avenue, and my present tenant was in a terrible rage at having the coal delivered, without his orders, and lying all day on the sidewalk.

“REPORTER.—Why don’t you pay Sothern back in his own coin.

“BILLY.—I wish I could. (Queries with anxiety) Are you going ’round to Wallack’s, to see Sothern?

“REPORTER.—Yes.

“BILLY.—Watch him carefully; he will probably use the utmost efforts to conceal his guilt.

“I had just put the finishing touches to my make-

up as Lord Dundreary, when I rushed against the man of letters, who appeared breathlessly anxious, and slightly nervous. In order to put him at his ease, I accosted him with, 'Well, old fellow, I am glad to meet you ; I found your card at my hotel the other day, and am sorry I wasn't in. What's afloat now ?'

"REPORTER.—I have a letter here, Mr. Sothern, signed with your name and addressed to the editor of the *Herald*, in which you charge Mr. William J. Florence with having originated the 'Flying Hoax,' at Trinity Church (exhibiting letter).

"SOTHERN.—Oh, my dear sir, this is simply atrocious. I never saw the letter, much less wrote it. You know I am as fond of a lark as anybody, when there is any lark going, but this thing is evidently the work of that infernal scoundrel, Florence.

"REPORTER.—I have just seen Mr. Florence, and he intimated to me that he believed you to be a ruffian of the deepest dye, and capable of committing any crime. He states that you sent fourteen tons of coal to his house on Park avenue, for the purpose of embroiling him in a vendetta with his tenant.

"Here I could not resist laughing immoderately at the absurdity of the whole thing, but on my recovery I dismissed the reporter, somewhat as follows : 'I acknowledge the coal transaction, but I assert that Florence must have imposed on you with a base imitation of my handwriting. A man *must* draw a

line somewhere, and *I* draw it at forgery ; so I'll have Florence arrested in the morning.'

"But I didn't get him arrested after all," said the genial host, "nor have I succeeded in convincing quite a number of intimates that I was *not* the originator of the 'Trinity Church hoax.' Still I *wasn't*."

SOTHERN AND THE COUNT JOANNES.

Among the curious incidents in Sothern's career during his recent visit to New York (1877-78), was a suit brought by George, the Count Joannes, formerly an actor, but in late years an eccentric lawyer, to stop the performance of the "Crushed Tragedian," on the ground that the "make-up" maligned the Count and generally burlesqued his identity. A reporter of one of the papers, who called on Sothern for information concerning the case, writes as follows :

"He had just driven up and was alighting from his coupé when a reporter reached the stage door of the Park Theatre. As the 'Crushed Tragedian' was to come on very shortly, he invited the caller to go into his dressing-room and talk with him while he was making up. He had not heard of the Count's proceeding, and was inclined to discredit the story. 'It's some joke,' said he, unbuttoning his shirt collar and reading a slip of newspaper which had been handed

him, containing an application of the Count to the court. 'Why, I never saw the man but once in my life, and that was four months after I began the "Crushed Tragedian." Does he *really* look like the Crushed? Well, God help him! Been thirty years making a reputation—that's not an unusual time; have known it to take longer—and I am taking it from *him*! Come, now, that's *too* much! Seriously, *is* this thing true? Well, if it is, and if I have to go down to that court to show cause, by George, I pity the man that brings me. I won't let him rest while his worried life clings to him! I have a dozen such suits on hand now, and *one* more won't trouble me much. He shall get telegrams and postals from this time on forever. Do about it? Why, I shall appear, of course. But I don't know the first thing about it, except what you have just told me. Now, my hair—(to his servant, who handed it)—has the Count Joannes really hair like this? I cannot believe it—it is some monstrous sell.'

"Mr. Sothern had put on the long, solemn hair of the 'Crushed Tragedian,' and his eyes were circled about with rings of tearful red, when there was a knock at the door and another reporter was announced—from the *Tribune*. Mr. Sothern threw a look of dark suspicion into his eye and sadly shook hand with him."

"I suppose you have heard, Mr. Sothern," said the new comer, "that the Count Joannes has ob-

tained an order from the court for you to show cause why you should not be enjoined from playing the 'Crushed Tragedian?'"

"Is this a joke, sir?" said the actor, stiffly, very.

"Oh, no, indeed! he really has. Haven't you heard of it?"

"I think there is a conspiracy, and now it strikes me that you are in it. But go on, sir. I never played a practical joke in my life, but—but go on, sir."

"Really, Mr. Sothern, this is a serious matter. The Count has actually applied"—

"Do you mean to tell me on your honor that you are not attempting to joke with me?"

"No, indeed, I"—

"Then I will say that when I go down to the court I shall enter into a disquisition on the Trojan war and discuss Sanscrit at length. I am not to be trifled with."

"Do you anticipate any personal trouble between the Count and yourself?"

"I *do*," responded the actor, pulling off his trousers.

"In case of a duel, whom would the challenge naturally come from?"

"Oh, from him. He is my senior, and I would not think of cutting in in such a matter."

"But he is titled, and so far as I know, a similar honor has never been conferred upon you by any German potentate."

"Only because I was too busy to go for it. It's waiting for me and I can have it any time I please."

"How would you fight the Count if he should call on you?"

"I prefer the first of April, but I haven't considered the matter fully, still I think with cannon! Yes, on reflection I am sure I shall insist upon those new Paris cannon that discharge 170 shots a minute. He shall sit upon one of these engines and I upon the other, when they shall be discharged; and straightway there shall be no remnant of either the Count or Sothern!"

"I am sure you are joking, sir. I wish we were not obliged to confine ourselves strictly to facts, for I think there is a good deal of humor in this thing."

"Oh, come, now," returned the actor, "don't say that about facts. You will make me laugh and I shall crack the paint."

"Well, what shall I say, Mr. Sothern?"

"Say that we shall fight with cannon, with improved Gatling guns, and that I don't know anything about the matter whatever. Say that I don't know anything about the Count Joannes and that I will shoot him to death with a Gatling gun. Say that if I ever see him again I will get myself up to look just like him, if he looks any worse than I do now. Say that the Crushed Tragedian, once trodden on, *never* sleeps. Say—oh, say what you d——n please!!!"

CALIFORNIA HOSPITALITY.—SOTHERN IN JAIL.

"It was one of those delightful practical jokes," said the narrator, "which occur in the lives of clever fellows and are remembered among the happy events of existence.

"The sun of the Pacific slope was just setting in a sea of gold, twilight was coming down the mountains on the East. Poor Edwin Adams and Florence sat in one of the parlors of the Palace Hotel in San Francisco. They were anxiously looking for Sothern, and never did two boys await the arrival of an elder brother, after a long absence from home, with more eager anticipation.

"'What time is it?' said Florence. 'I wonder when the train will be here? Wait a moment, I'll inquire at the office.'

"Billy soon returned with the news that the train was coming and would be at the depot at 10 o'clock with their friend on board.

"'That's glorious!' exclaimed Ned. 'I wonder how the dear boy is; I don't think I ever had such pleasurable anticipations.'

"'Why, of course he is well,' said Billy, 'he is always well. Now, Ned, look out for fun, I'm going to square up my joke account with Dundreary. It's the very time to do it, and I want you to help me.'

“‘Good,’ said Ned, ‘I am with you, my boy, go ahead.’

“‘The practical jokes that he has played upon me,’ said Billy, ‘have been original and very funny. The ingenuity of the scamp has been something wonderful : for a good square, original practical joke no man that ever I heard of can touch Ned Sothern ; his inventive powers are marvellous. I’ll tell you, while we are waiting, one or two he played upon me.

“‘He once inserted an advertisement in the *New York Herald*, the substance of which was that I wanted ten dogs, two each, Newfoundland, black-and-tan, spitz, setters and a poodle, and that the dog men should apply at seven o’clock in the morning until three in the afternoon, for three days, at my residence.

“‘The next morning by eight o’clock the street in front of my house was crowded with men and dogs fighting their way around the front stoop. Aroused by the infernal noise I got out of my bed, went to the window, and as I drew back the curtain and exposed my head and shoulders, every fellow in that motley crowd held up his dog and yelled, ‘Here he is, Mr. Florence, this is the one you want.’ I don’t know what else they said, for the howling and barking of the dogs and the laughter of the crowd drowned all other sounds. I was at a loss to account for this strange sight. Mrs. F. came to the window, took in the scene, and with that nice perception of things

which never deserts the sex in an emergency, said : ‘Why, I see what this is ; it cannot be anything but one of Ned Sothern’s jokes, my dear,’ and with that she exclaimed, ‘look, *look*, it’s he ! There is Sothern himself !’

“ ‘I had retreated a short distance from the window, but when Mrs. F. said that the great joker was present in person I went forward, and sure enough there he was, looking at a beautiful skye terrier, which he afterwards purchased. He turned to my window and with that characteristic way he has of adjusting his eyeglass, he put it on and looked straight at me as if he had never seen me, and then innocently asked a boy, who was holding an ugly cur, ‘who lives in that house ? What queer person is that who is shaking his fist at us ?’ ‘Why, Florence, the actor, lives there, and he advertised for dogs, and that’s what’s the matter,’ answered the urchin.

“ ‘Going into the dog business, I suppose ?’ said Sothern. ‘Yes,’ said the boy, ‘I reckon he is—he is always doing something for us fellows.’ Dundreary jogged along among the crowd and he said afterwards, it was one of his most successful jokes.

“ ‘At another time, he sent three or four undertakers to my house in the middle of the night. The last trick he played upon me was very good. I had invited a number of fellows to dine with me, and we were expecting a good time. When we were pretty well

through the dessert, one of the gentlemen went outside into the hall and in a few minutes returned, saying that there was an old man at the door who wished to see Mr. Florence, and that he would not go away until I came to the door. After a little while I went out and found the antediluvian on the stoop outside. He seemed to be very infirm and quite lame. I invited him inside and he told that he was about to return to the old country; that he had lost all of his family in America, and was going home to the land of his fathers to die. He had a few things left from the general wreck of his household which he wished to sell, and thereupon took some mantel ornaments and other articles of virtu from his pocket, saying they were the last things he had saved, and if I could spare him \$300 for them he could buy a steerage ticket that would carry him home.

“I saw that the articles were valuable, told him to keep them and handed him \$300. Thinking I had done a pretty good thing I returned to the dining-room and gave orders to the servant to let the beggar out. The servant returned, saying that the old fellow had already gone, and so indeed he had.

“Some of the company suggested that he *might* have been a fraud. ‘Just look around and see if he has not taken a few things.’ I then bethought me that the articles he showed looked like some of my own. I rushed into the parlor to find that the old

thief had taken my own things. The alarm was given and police sent for.

“‘In a few moments two officers appeared and began a search. One of the servants reported that he saw the old man going up-stairs. The officers rushed up, and after a look through the rooms on the two upper stories discovered him looking over some photographs. The officers, of course, seized him. He resisted and gave it to them pretty roughly with his tongue. ‘Bring the old ruffian down,’ I cried, ‘bring him into the dining-room.’

“‘Until then I had not thoroughly scanned the aged villain’s countenance. Imagine my amazement when I looked into that eye which no power on earth could disguise or change, to find that the man I had hold of was Sothern himself. It was a dead sell on us all.

“‘Sothern had prepared himself fully for this joke as he always does on important occasions. He brought with him a wig, beard, pair of slippers and a long coat, and a villainous old hat.

“‘While we were pretty well along’——

“‘Yes, I see,’ said Mr. Adams, ‘you were pretty well along. Of course you were.’

“‘I mean,’ said Billy, ‘that we were well along in the evening.’

“‘Yes, certainly you were; if you were not you should have been,’ replied Adams.

“‘Well, as I was about to say, Sothern slipped out

of the dining-room and in a few moments was transformed into an ancient Hibernian on my door step. This was voted by the whole company as one of the most successful practical jokes ever practiced, and so it was, by a "large majority."

"The time approaches," said Adams, looking up at the great clock.

"Yes," answered Florence; 'now I'll tell you my plan for a big thing, Ned.

"We will take a carriage and go to the depot, and as soon as the train arrives we will scoop the old boy up and drive to the city prison and slap him in jail. I have arranged to commit him, let the jailer into the secret, and upon my holding him harmless he will pay the stern keeper.'

"We won't keep him in but a few minutes though,' responded the tender-hearted Ned, 'only a few minutes, Billy?'

"Leave that to me,' said Florence. 'You know I would not harm a hair of his head. Leave it all to me. Sothern will enjoy it when it is over as much as we do; he is one of the kind who enjoys a good joke on himself as well as if it were played on anyone else—more so.'

"The train was on time, and as soon as it stopped, one of the first passengers who got off the platform was the veritable Sothern. Billy and his friend

were with him in a moment. The greetings were heartfelt and sincere.

“‘Now, my old boy, come along ; we have the best of rooms for you, and as this is your first visit, we will see (looking askance at Ned) that you are firmly settled.’

“The carriage soon had them in front of the city prison. It seemed but a moment since they left the depot, so interested had Mr. Sothern been in the conversation of his friends. The three alighted and the two conspirators rushed Mr. Sothern up to the jail register. Ned put the pen in his hand while Billy took his satchel, and after the name was down they hurried him off to his ‘room.’ A turn-key led the way down the corridor and Sothern was ushered into a side apartment. He said he thought it was a very plain-looking place, and was amazed when he saw bars at the window, but observed this must be their way out here. He took a seat at the table and being left alone, overheard the following conversation.

“‘We have him at last, Jack.’

“‘Have him ! Who do you mean ?’

“‘Why, that awful murderer and robber of Yellow Creek Flats,’ replied the first speaker. ‘We are going to handcuff him, and put him in the dungeon.’

“‘Well, he ought to be there ; he is the worst

criminal in California, and he will certainly be hung in a short time.'

"Sothern now saw through it all, and began to kick the door, and ask that it be opened. There was a slide in the panel, and this was pushed aside by one of the turnkeys, who gruffly inquired, 'Now, what do you want, you infernal robber and highwayman?'

"'Well, sir,' said Sothern, 'I want you first to open this door, and then I will tell you what I want.'

"The only reply to this was: 'We are coming in directly, to put a pair of bracelets on you.'

"'Now see here, my good friend, this is all a joke, and, as it has been carried far enough, you had better open the doors.'

"'That's "too thin,"' said the turnkey, "'too thin." Do you suppose you could fool us with that kind of chaff; I guess not!'

"In the meantime, Billy and Ned had gone off to spread the news that Mr. Sothern had been arrested and sent to the city prison. A large delegation of friends at once left the hotel, and proceeded to the jail. Inquiring for the jailer, he promptly appeared, and being asked for the commitment, he produced a paper with a great many grand flourishes, and a considerable number of hieroglyphics upon it, and said: 'This is what was handed to me.' Upon a close examination, it was found to be signed by Guillemano Florenza and Edouard Adam, detectives.

A well-known magistrate, at this juncture, stepped forward, and Mr. Sothern being brought before him, was at once released as a victim of kidnappers. Dundreary admitted that he had been handsomely inveigled and sold by his two friends. Billy and Ned had meanwhile ordered the finest supper at the hotel ever known on the Pacific coast, and a company of forty gentlemen sat down to enjoy, with the guest of the evening, an occasion which, for mirth and genuine jollity, has rarely had its equal in that or any other part of the country.

“ ‘And this,’ says Florence, ‘was the way I got even with “the boy.” He won’t forget it soon, either.’ ”

REMINISCENCES OF A MANAGER.

One evening, at a dinner-party, Mr. Sothern being temporarily called away from his guests, Mr. Stephen Fiske, the manager of the Fifth Avenue Theatre in New York, related a number of reminiscences which, inasmuch as they illustrate the character of the actor, and traits of which he himself would not speak, are worthy of reproduction here. Speaking of the first appearance of Mr. Sothern as Lord Dundreary, in London, he said :

“It was about the year 1851. Mr. Buckstone, the manager of the Haymarket Theatre, was in want of an attraction; and taking a liking to ‘the young

American actor,' as he was called, agreed to produce 'Our American Cousin,' although he did so with not a little fear and trembling. All the actors and actresses connected with the theatre predicted its failure. Buckstone himself consented to play the part of Asa Trenchard, to help the performance along, but nobody except Sothern had any confidence in its success. During the rehearsal of the play, Mrs. —, one of the old Haymarket stock company, and a representative of all the gossip of the green-room, came upon the stage while Sothern was running over his famous letter scene. He turned, and said, 'My dear madam, don't come on here till you get your cue. In fact, on the night of the performance, you will have twenty minutes to wait during this scene.'

"'Why,' said the lady, satirically, 'do you expect so much applause?'

"'Yes,' replied Sothern, 'I know how long this scene always plays.'

"'Ah!' answered the madam, 'but suppose the audience should not take your view of the matter.'

"'In that case,' said Sothern, 'you won't have to bother yourself, for I and the piece will have been condemned a good hour before your services will be required.'

"I regard this," said Mr. Fiske, "as one of the most striking instances of courageous confidence concerning a new play, that is recorded in connection

with the history of the stage. The success of 'Our American Cousin' was immediate and continuous. Everybody understood it, everybody enjoyed it, and Lord Dundreary was elevated to the peerage of Great Britain, Ireland and Scotland, by unanimous consent, and he is now, by long odds, the best known member of the English aristocracy."

"How was it regarded by the people whom it burlesqued?"

"The swells of London, whom it was supposed would be very hostile to this caricature of a British nobleman, were the first to appreciate and understand it, and adopt its mannerisms, its drawl, its dress, and often its peculiar skip. To this day you cannot make yourself better understood in London than when you speak of Dundreary whiskers to your barber, or a Dundreary coat to your tailor. The most popular actors seldom get beyond a necktie or a photograph, but Dundreary has created a peer and a style. Sothern is the best friend that the tailors ever had. Any first class tailor in New York or London would furnish him with all the clothes he requires—and he uses hundreds of suits in a year—if he would only accept them. In London, as in New York, his modern costumes on and off the stage are regarded as models by the most fashionable people. At one time he bought a frieze coat from a pig drover in Ireland, because he thought it was picturesque and comfortable, and introduced some-

thing like it on the stage. Thus originated the ulster and its half dozen variations. Every man who wears an ulster to-day is therefore, without knowing it, a walking advertisement of Mr. Sothern's example."

SOTHERN IN HIS DRESSING-ROOM.

"Of course, Mr. Fiske, you have met Mr. Sothern, from time to time, in his dressing-room. What impression has he created upon you there?"

"Yes, I have spent many hours with him under the circumstances to which you refer, and have always been interested not only in his conversation, which is more serious then than at any other time, but in the novel and artistic means whereby his wonderful stage transformations are effected. Nobody could look more unlike the Sothern of real life than 'The Crushed Tragedian.' There could be no greater contrast to 'The Crushed Tragedian' than Brother Sam, and nobody could possibly identify his David Garrick with his Lord Dundreary. I do not speak so much of difference in costume, in the color of his wigs, or the shades of his paint, as of the curious change in facial expression—in what the Irish call 'the look of his eye;' in the tones of his voice, and in the entire character and deportment of the man. In Garrick, his enunciation is as clear as a bell; in Dundreary, he lisps, stammers and drawls; in the Crushed Tra-



gedian, he growls, and as Sydney Spoonbill, he is the simple-hearted, out-spoken gentlemen. In fact, he seems to have a different voice for each part which he undertakes to represent. The old joke about an Othello, who in the enthusiasm of art painted himself all over, happens to be perfectly true of Mr. Sothern in a metaphysical way. Look at him standing in front of his glass, doing what is technically called his 'make-up.' As he advances and recedes from the glass to mark the effect of the lines which he is painting on his face, you will notice that little by little he falls into the peculiar gait and mannerism of the character he is about to assume, and he does this unconsciously, as if he were putting on the part as well as the paint, until as he stands before you the transformation is as complete as when you observe him on the stage. It is likewise a great test of his art that you feel a kind of shock when, after this transformation, you see him sit down in his chair, light a segar and begin to talk about subjects which have no reference to the peculiar character in which he is attired. You don't know whether you are addressing Sothern or The Crushed Tragedian. As regards the materials of his dressing-room they are as simple as himself. Where other stars lug round with them objects of vertu and unnecessary articles with which to adorn this apartment, Mr. Sothern carries nothing but a trunk or two and his dressing-case. No! I forget

one thing: he is always accompanied by 'Baby,' his little Scotch terrier. He also takes less time to 'make up' his character than any actor I ever have seen."

A TRIBUTE FROM A MANAGER.

"I believe," said a listener, "that he has quite a reputation for being a charitable man."

"Yes," replied Mr. Fiske, "and all the charitable affairs with which he has been connected are said by carpers to be designed as advertisements. Would to heaven other people would advertise themselves in the same way, for there would be less poverty and suffering in the world. Most persons forget that in charity work, instead of advertising the actor, it is always Mr. Sothern who advertises the charity, and in both countries, to my knowledge, he has repeatedly injured his business at the theatre with which he has been connected, in order to do some good deed for a deserving man or woman in the profession. He has no need of that species of advertising which comes from giving large sums of money to poor institutions, and devoting his time and labor for the benefit of others. During every day of his life his name is in a hundred newspapers, gratuitously, and probably in dozens of others at a cost of from fifteen to forty cents a line, and it will always be so, through his artistic connec-

tions, even though he should have to foreswear benevolence forever. If I could see some great tragedian, or playwright, some great author, or painter, sculptor or editor, devoting so much of his time, work and money, to the poor as this unpretentious actor does regularly every year, I should have more patience with the cant about 'advertising.' What an effect it would have on the world if Wilkie Collins were to announce that he was going to write a book for the relief of the widow of Tom Robertson, or Gustave Doré was going to paint a picture, to be exhibited and sold for the benefit of the family of a property-artist who had died impecunious, or if the proprietor of any first-class paper in America were to agree to give the entire proceeds of one day's issue of his paper to a literary guild, or an eleemosynary institution. Would anybody accuse either of these gentlemen of being guilty of an attempt to advertise himself? It is because this benevolence is so exceptional that small-minded people cannot possibly believe it to be genuine. Knowing Mr. Sothern as well as I do, and believing him to be a very wealthy man, I would rather have his credit on the bank Up Yonder than all the money he has invested down below."

THE DUMMY CORNETIST.

"Perhaps," said Mr. Stephen Fiske, "you have never

heard the curious incident connected with the love scene in 'Home.' It is this : A part of that scene was originally played at—not on—a piano, the real pianist being concealed behind a screen, while Sothern and a young lady acted their parts at a dummy in the presence of the audience. During the long run of the play in London, Sothern by constant rehearsals managed to do away with the piano behind the screen, and the young lady actually played the music which at first she only appeared to perform. Struck with the effect which she produced by her musical interpolations during the dialogue, he himself began to work out the idea of a solo on the cornet which should be likewise interspersed with remarks of an amusing character. Tooting on the cornet, however, is not one of Sothern's many accomplishments. He accordingly hired a regular artist on the instrument and established such intimate relations with him that the sympathies of the two soon became nearly identical. He rehearsed him scores of times behind the scenes at the Haymarket until the player became absolutely perfect, and then employed a man whose special duty it was to allow no person to speak to the cornetist during the performance under pain of instant dismissal. The consequence was that when Sothern raised his dummy cornet to his lips the man behind the screen prepared for action ; when Sothern appeared to play,

the artist made the music ; when Sothern dropped the instrument in order to carry on the dialogue the cornetist ceased, and nobody not in the secret ever would have discovered that two persons were engaged in representing that feature of the performance.

“When Sothern sent the copy to Wallack’s Theatre in this city, the business of the cornet was marked in it, but not the method by which he had achieved such a success abroad, and the result was rather ludicrous. Sothern always had been very careful to instruct the cornetist with reference to the cues ; but where he had twenty rehearsals Wallack had only one or two ; where Sothern had gone to much trouble and the expense of hiring a man to specially second his efforts, Wallack had to depend on the intelligence of the musician, and the watchfulness of the stage manager. When the scene occurred, Mr. Wallack raised the cornet to his lips, and the stage manager, in his zealous, eager manner whispered to the artist : ‘Now look out sharp ! Be ready !’ The cornetist—he was a German—at this instant dropped his instrument and with an interrogative look upon his stolid countenance exclaimed : ‘Vas ist das ?’ Meanwhile the cue had been passed, and Wallack, on the stage, was working at the pistons, producing, of course, not the slightest sound. A second afterwards he dropped

his dummy cornet in despair, not dreaming of course what had taken place in the rear, and proceeded with his dialogue, but the poor Dutchman, anxious to earn his money and get his notes in, kept right on and poured forth a flood of melody which produced about the same effect on the audience that Munchausen's horn with its frozen notes did upon the crew when they drifted from the arctic ocean to the southern seas. Since that eventful night Wallack has always omitted the cornet scene when he undertakes Sothern's part of *Col. John White*.

SOTHERN IN LONDON.

"Sothern in London," continued Mr. Fiske, "was a veritable king of mirth, holding daily and nightly court with such rare spirits as J. L. Toole, Henry J. Byron, Tom Robertson, Buckstone, Johnstone and a score of other gentlemen who are well known in theatrical and artistic circles. Every morning the town was startled by some fresh social excitement, and every evening the clubs rang with laughter over Sothern's latest exploits. His practical jokes were of every description, from the intricate mechanical pleasantries designed by his friend, Col. Johnstone, to the off-hand flippancy of getting a ragged newsboy for half a crown to turn somersaults and plant his dirty feet in the abdomen of a reputable banker. What may be called

the Johnstonian era of Sothern's London experiences was illustrated by his exposé of the Davenport brothers and his fitting up an apartment with electrical and mechanical contrivances for the purpose of producing extraordinary effects on Johnstone's guests. You were invited, for example, to dine with the pair, entered the dining-room with other gentlemen in true British fashion and there found only a table, with nothing on it except the cloth, knives and forks and a 'bill of lading.' No servants were in the room and there was no evidence of a repast. After everybody had been sufficiently surprised, Mr. Sothern would blandly inquire 'what sort of soup will you have?' Every guest was at liberty to mention his preference, which being done, the door was soon after opened and in marched the servant with the article ordered. The same system was observed all through the different courses. Every kind of food apparently was in the kitchen ready cooked that could be gotten up by mortal man, and everything was in the cellar that could be drank, from Hungarian Burgundy to Bourbon 'straight.' After dinner cigars were handed around, and upon the guest expressing a wish to have a light, a blue flame would burst out from the centre of the table. These curious effects were accomplished by means of electrical devices operated under the table by Col. Johnstone's feet, which established telegraphic communication with the cook down stairs, who had

been previously supplied with every variety of canned soups, meats and vegetables that the market afforded, and which required but a moment's preparation in order to supply the wants of the respective guests.

A SOCIABLE SHOWER BATH.

"In St. James street Sothern had very elegantly furnished apartments which he was fond of lending to such of his friends as wished to spend a night in town. An acute observer, however, noticed that no friend from the country ever occupied those rooms twice, and a very respectable ghost story was once worked up on this foundation. The secret finally leaked out that no sooner did the guest stretch himself on Sothern's luxurious couch, than his weight on the bed started a small edition of the deluge, and hundreds of tiny streams of lavender water poured down from the ceiling on the unhappy individual, drenching him to the skin. It may comfort some of these victims, however, to know that Sothern himself, after a hunting frolic, once occupied these apartments, and forgetful of his own preparations, became his own victim.

"Advertisements, apparently emanating from the offices of respectable city firms and railway companies' offices, for coal-heavers and navvies to apply at confectioners' and bakers' shops; notices for undertakers to gather at a certain house at a certain time, or at

the green-room of some of the principal theatres, were also incidents of this era. [Of this species of nonsense Mr. Sothern denies any knowledge.—*Editor.*]

AN OMNIBUS ADVENTURE.

“Walking down Regent street with me one day, he said: ‘You go ahead a couple of blocks, Fiske, and I’ll go back, but we will both take the Atlas omnibus.’ I followed his instructions, and entering the omnibus found Sothern sitting in the diagonally opposite corner. I naturally looked at him with some curiosity to know why he had sent me two blocks ahead. Perceiving this, he assumed a very fierce and belligerent expression, and exclaimed: ‘Are you staring at me, sir?’ The omnibus was filled with several elderly ladies, two quiet gentlemen who looked like clergymen, and a farmer from the country. I took the cue at once, and replied: ‘No; if I wanted to stare at anybody, I would stare at a better looking man than yourself.’ At this, Sothern’s indignation apparently became uncontrollable, and it required all of the force of the clergymen, seconded by the farmer, to keep him in his seat, and prevent him from throwing himself upon me. Finally he insisted upon stopping the ‘bus,’ and invited me to step outside, and either apologize then and there for the insult, or fight him on the spot. I pretended to prefer to do the latter; but

said I would remain in the omnibus, whereupon Soth-
ern took off his overcoat, and handed it to the nearest
old maid to hold for him while he chastised me for
my impertinence. In the course of the desultory re-
marks in which we indulged during this *melée*, he
chanced to observe that he would allow nobody except
his friend John Robinson, of Philadelphia, to speak to
him in that way and live ; whereupon I immediately
informed him that my name was Robinson, surnamed
John, and that I had just arrived from America, but
that I hadn't the pleasure of his acquaintance, nor did
I particularly desire it. In an instant Soth-
ern's manner completely changed, and, climbing over the old
maids, the clergymen, and the farmer, to my corner
of the stage, he endeavored to embrace me like a long
lost friend. He avowed that he never had been more
delighted in his life ; stopped the omnibus, and pro-
posed that we should get out together, which we
thereupon proceeded to do. The comedy we had en-
acted, and the astonishment depicted on the faces of
the inmates of the coach, exceeded anything I ever
saw on the stage, and afforded food for laughter for
many days.

SOTHERN AND TOOLE.

“One night, after 12 o'clock, Toole and Soth-
ern took possession of the porter's room at Humman's

Hotel and sent the porter to the top of the house to find Billy Florence, who was supposed to be a guest there. Meanwhile the pair undertook to attend personally to the wants of the strangers who were stopping at the hotel, and came to the wicket to demand admittance. It must be understood that the wicket was only large enough to expose a single face. The first to present himself was a clergyman, who was very gravely informed by Toole that his 'attentions to the chambermaid had been discovered, and that he would find his trunk in the morning at Covent Garden Market opposite; that this was a respectable house and he didn't wish anything more to do with such a man.' While the clergyman in his indignation was absent in Bow street to hunt up a police officer and make his troubles known, the proprietor of the hotel appeared and was promptly notified by Sothern who now appeared at the wicket, that they had 'already missed enough spoons during his visit and that his valise would be thrown down to him in a few minutes, from the top story, and if he wished to avoid Newgate he had better reform his practices or try them upon some other hotel.' This joke would have had rather a serious termination if the proprietor had not entered by a side door and discovered Toole and Sothern at their pranks, from the rear; but as soon as he found out who they were, he was so overjoyed at the presence of two such worthies in his house and

the oddity of the jokes they had played, that he ordered one of the best of hot suppers, sent for Billy Florence, and kept things going in a lively way until morning."

MANAGERIAL COMPLIMENTS.

"The St. James and Haymarket Theatres in London are about as far apart as the Park and Fifth Avenue Theatres in New York—say three blocks. They are rival theatres. Sothorn was playing at one and I managing the other. On one occasion when I had a crowded house and was as busy as a bee, Sothorn, wishing to send me a note at the St. James, enclosed it in a packing box and entrusted it to the porter with instructions to dump it precisely where it would be in the way and obstruct the ingress of people. I replied with a dray and a barrel, whereupon, on the principle that the end justified the means, he retorted with a pair of horses and a molasses hogshead. So if he could succeed in blocking up the front of my theatre for a couple of hours when he intended to invite me to dinner, he was perfectly satisfied to go to any expense or indulge in any nonsense. On the other hand if I was able to stop the way in Kensington Lane which led to his residence, with a dray or other vehicle that permitted no other guest with his carriage to pass en route to a dinner party, I was very glad in that manner to get even with him.

CAUGHT AT LAST.

"I never knew Mr. Sothern to back down from any joke but once. We noticed, one day, while walking through Hyde park, an official notice from the head of the English park commission: 'Stage coaches, omnibuses, and funerals are prohibited from crossing the park,' &c. We also noticed that the procession of old dowagers, driving backwards and forwards in their ancient coaches, were enough like funerals to violate the order. Now, in England they have a kind of vehicle which is called a mourning brougham, made like a mourning coach, covered with seedy sable material, and got up expressly for people who can't afford the extravagance of a mourning coach. Nobody ever saw one of these broughams, unless on its way to one of the London cemeteries, with a black horse in the shafts, and an unmistakeable undertaker's man with his long hat-band in the coachman's place. It struck me there was nothing in the order which would prohibit Sothern and myself from hiring one of these broughams, and taking our afternoon drive regularly in the procession of dowagers, he looking from one window and I out of the other, and enjoying our cigars and ourselves in such a manner that the most obtuse policeman himself would never object to. Sothern fell in with this idea at once, but every day for more than a week when I drove to his house in a

different mourning brougham, and presented myself for inspection, he always managed to find some excuse for postponing the proposed drive, and I never could persuade him to undertake this funeral expedition in the park. After a few visits of this character, it began to dawn upon me that Sothern was inclined to have his own joke at his friend's expense, whereupon I procured a small wooden coffin about the size of a three months old infant, and every time that Sothern declined to accompany me to the park, I had this coffin placed conspicuously on the box as I drove away from his house. The number of surreptitious infants buried from Kensington Lane during that month was something enormous, and Sothern got the credit of the whole of them.

"The only time Sothern ever did what they call 'the Sothern cross' on me was in revenge for a joke I perpetrated on him. Immediately after the performance and before I could leave the theatre, he had carpenters at the stage and front doors who within five minutes from the time the audience left, screwed up every means I had of making an exit. I scarcely need say that I was angry and discomposed, and we have never spoken since—except when we meet.

A SPIRITUAL JOKE.

"I remember a curious experiment which Sothern

made in New York while a well known actress was playing at the Winter Garden. Sothern was engaged in a discussion upon spiritualism with a gentleman in the corridor or lobby, and said : ‘ Now, let me give you an instance of the power of a medium. You observe that she is on the stage and of course she can’t hear what I say at this instant. But if you will watch her while I count ‘one, two, three,’ you will observe that she will tremble, turn pale and lean against the actor with whom she is playing.’ As Sothern did so, he pulled out his handkerchief, rubbed it against the window looking into the audience, and precisely what he had predicted occurred. It was so naturally done that even I was deceived until after the performance when the actress, sending for me, said : ‘ Mr. Fiske, what was Mr. Sothern’s object in asking me, as a special favor, to lean against H——, when he rubbed his handkerchief against the glass?’ I did not myself find out until during a subsequent conversation at supper, he explained the joke. It illustrates one of his methods. He had told her what to do.

AS A CONJUROR.

“Sothern’s reputation in London as a conjuror, second sightist and general magician, was very great. Scores of the young sprigs of the aristocracy were in the habit of visiting his house to enjoy his dinners, smoke

his cigars and admire his horses. I have sometimes assisted him in his after-dinner frolics. On one occasion, by special request, he communicated his power to me. I was sent out of the room, and while absent the gentlemen selected a number, wrote it down on a piece of paper, and concealed it under a silver candlestick in the centre of the table. On my return to the room, Sothern made a few mysterious passes, and one of the gentlemen was asked to inquire of me what was the concealed number, whereupon I promptly replied, '93,701,' which, to the astonishment of every person present, except Sothern and myself, was correct. I don't mind telling you that this was the number previously agreed upon between us, and all of Mr. Sothern's art, while I was out of the room, had been employed in persuading the young fellows to select that number as preferable to all others, from the fact that I would never be able to guess such a particular combination. Sometimes he would go out of the room and I would help select the number, but always with the invariable result.

UNDER THE TABLE.

"A curious joke that illustrates Sothern's knowledge of human nature occurred at a dinner party, or what we Americans would call 'a stag party,' at his own house in England. Eight or ten gentlemen were

present. In the midst of the meal Mr. English, Sothern's friend and agent, was announced. 'Now, boys,' said Sothern, 'all of you get under the table—every man of you—and don't stir until I give the word. This is the best joke on English that you ever saw.' Suiting the action to the word, down went the guests and in came Mr. English. Sitting by the side of Mr. Sothern he proceeded to discuss the business that had brought him to the house apparently without taking any notice of the vacant chairs or the litter on the table. Mr. Sothern on his part said nothing about his other guests until one by one the gentlemen under the table wearied with their forced retirement and uncomfortable position, and unable to see where the joke came in, crawled up, and to the astonishment of Mr. Sothern's last guest, resumed their places. As each one appeared Mr. Sothern gave him a sly wink—one of those famous Dundreary winks you have seen on the stage—as much as to say 'keep quiet, old fellow,' until the whole party were re-seated and the dinner proceeded as usual. Down to this hour not one of those gentlemen has ever succeeded in getting Mr. Sothern to explain where the joke was on English, but perhaps some of them may see it when they read this narrative. The same magnetism he uses on the stage he used on these fellows. Though not one of them knew why he was

going under the table, he couldn't refuse the request to do so.

A HUNTING INCIDENT.

When in England fox hunting is his favorite pastime, and his stock is one of no inconsiderable extent and excellence. Many a time has his passion for following the hounds cost him a great deal of inconvenience in the way of getting to town as best he might in time for the theatre, and one occasion of this sort is perpetuated by him in a most amusing—as told by him—post prandial story. Late one afternoon he and a friend of his who had been clearing hedges like good fellows all day with a fair field and no fox, turned their horses' heads townward. Plunging through the mist that had settled down with a pouring rain, Sothern ran plump into a wagon coming in the opposite direction; the shaft penetrated his favorite mare's breast, and in a few moments the poor beast was dead. What to do, the comedian and his friend could not imagine, but it was finally settled that the latter should ride back to where Sothern's groom had stopped—a roadside inn—inform him of the mare's death, and get him to come out with some trap to convey his master to the station of Hole-in-the-Wold, or wherever it was in that down country region.

By the time Sothern's friend reached the groom

that individual, secure in the belief that his master was by that time on a train bound Londonward, was gloriously drunk. All efforts to make him understand what had occurred were futile ; all he could say was : " I-s-h Jenny dead ? Well, I'm dommed ! " Finally, he grew lachrymose and wept. " And what did Jenny say afore she died ? " he inquired, pathetically. The gentleman thought he might as well humor him ; so he said—" Well, Jenny said ' Tom always told me how this would end. ' " " Did—hic—Jenny say that ? " cried the inebriated groom. " Boys," turning to his boon companions, " who says a beast don't know what's what ? Did Jenny say that ? I allus thought ud Jenny was a rare un. Jenny knew—hic ! " Sothern delineates this case of the most infatuated " drunk " he ever knew in an exceedingly entertaining manner. When his friend came back from where the credulous posset-drugged groom was holding forth in a way that would have delighted Mr. Bergh, Sothern roared with laughter through the rain ; and when he mounted his friend's horse and sped on his way to the station, leaving perforce his faithful Amigo to watch over the mare's body, still he chuckled at the man's tipsy conceit. Despite this hunting delay, he reached the theatre a moment before the patience of the audience had been exhausted by too much orchestra.

“TWO BOB FOR A SUMMERSAULT.”

One dull day in London—a rainy, foggy day, such as only London can produce—a well known actress then playing there proposed to Sothern that they should go on a lark. “Agreed,” said he, and off they started in a hansom, intent on finding the opportunity which Sothern assured his companion he would procure before they returned to the theatre. Near the Adelphi, Sothern saw a stout, well-dressed gentleman, with a clean white vest encasing an expansive stomach, enter a candy shop. No sooner had the probable *pere de famille* gone for his sweets, than Sothern called one of the ragged boys gathered at the crossing and said to him: “Look here, my man, I’ll give you a shilling if you turn a hand-spring so as to throw those particularly dirty feet of yours against the white vest of the gentleman who has just gone in to get some sweets in that shop, as he comes out; and I’ll give you two shillings if you turn a second one so as to catch him in the back.” “All right, guv’nor,” grinned the boy, and Sothern and Mrs. ——— watched intently from their cab. In a moment or so the stout gentleman emerged, one arm occupied with his umbrella, the other clasping a huge bundle of sweets, and suffused, as it were, with an atmosphere of loving kindness. “Now I’ll give the children a treat,” he seemed to say, but vain hope! His foot had scarcely touched the pavement before the

dirty bare feet of the relentless gamin not only smirched his white vest, but fairly doubled him up; his hands flew to his stomach, his bundle and umbrella flew to the pavement; he had no time to breathe before the boy's flying feet hit him in the back and nearly overturned him quite. The two conspirators in the cab roared with laughter, but suddenly up came the small boy, closely followed by the maddened citizen. "Give me my two bob, sir," shouted the boy. "Hush, you young ragamuffin," said Sothern. "He promised to give me two bob if I would pitch into you," shouted the boy. "You did, sir, you did, eh?" cried the citizen, doubly irate. Sothern flung the boy his money, and shouted to the driver, "Whip up your horses! go it, old fellow, and you shall have a sovereign!" They rattled on, the citizen of the erst spotless vest cursing their memory. Sothern says that Mrs. ——— was in such hysterics that she slipped off the seat and reposed on the floor of the cab, shaken with mighty mirth until she was lifted out at the theatre, still convulsed with merriment.

A BEFOGGED CLERK.

On another occasion the same fun-loving pair wandered into an ironmonger's shop in quest of food for laughter, Sothern assuming the responsibility. He advanced to the counter and said, "Have

you the second edition of Macaulay's History of England?" The shopkeeper explained that he kept an ironmonger's establishment. "Well, it don't matter whether it is bound in calf or not," answered the customer.

"But, sir, this is not a bookseller's."

"It don't matter how you put it up," says Sothern; "a piece of brown paper—the sort of a thing you would give your own mother."

"Sir!" bawled the shopkeeper, "we—don't—keep it! No books; this is an ironmonger's shop."

"Yes," says Sothern, "the binding differs, but I'm not particular—as long as I have a flyleaf.

"Sir!" fairly screamed the shopkeeper, "can't you see we keep no books? This is an ironmonger's shop!"

"Certainly," said Sothern, seating himself; "I'll wait for it."

Believing that his customer was either hopelessly deaf or equally mad, the man called another from the other end of the store and explained that he could do nothing with the gentleman.

"What do you wish, sir?" shouted the second man, advancing.

"I should like," says Sothern, quietly, "a small plain file, about so long."

"Certainly, sir," said the man, casting upon bewildered No. 1 a glance of the most unmitigated disgust.

Before the article could be procured, Mrs. ———, who had been pretending to be occupied in looking at saws and such trifles, had yielded to always dominant risibilities, so that she became quite helpless, and Sothern incontinently fled with his purchase as soon as he could obtain it, leaving her to recover at her leisure. When they met at the theatre she accused him of having abandoned her after reducing her to an utterly inert state by his practical joke, but he made it all right by presenting her, not with Macaulay's History, but the file.

LORD DUNDREARY IN HANDCUFFS.

Mr. Stephen Fiske relates the following anecdote :

“Perhaps one of the densest crowds that London ever knew, assembled to witness the entry of the Prince of Wales, with the Princess Alexandra, some years ago. The refined beauty and grace of the little Princess had been loudly proclaimed throughout the land, and curiosity to see the bride of the future King of England was up to fever heat. The line of route was not a long one, some of the streets being very narrow ; and it was calculated at the time that over three millions of people, from various points of the compass, assisted at this welcoming spectacle.

“The procession having to promenade Fleet street, *en route* to Temple Bar (without passing through

which ancient and vexatious portal no respectable procession would be complete), the editor of *Punch* issued invitations to a select coterie of artistic and literary friends to assemble at the *Punch* office, at ten o'clock in the morning, to partake of lunch and see the show from the windows. As a sample of the stamp of men present, there were Mark Lemon, Shirley Brooks, Tom Taylor, John Leech, Tenniel, the entire *Punch* staff; Millais and Frith, the eminent painters; Ruskin, Lord Lytton, Charles Dickens, Cruikshank, Tennyson—in fact, a more brilliant assembly of men of genius, perhaps, rarely met under one roof. A magnificent entertainment was served; and if the good things that were said on that bright March morning, had been carefully noted down, they would have filled a number of the famous journal within whose walls the company met.

“Among the persons expected was Sothorn, the comedian, whose Lord Dundreary was at that moment making people laugh their heads off at the Haymarket Theatre. The procession was not to move until twelve o'clock, and Lord Dundreary did not leave home until about half-past ten. All was plain sailing as far as Fleet street; and, discharging his carriage at the corner of a street intersecting this thoroughfare, he reached Fleet street, and by dint of hard squeezing and pushing, prevailing, and watching every movement of the gigantic crowd, he at last got oppo-

site the *Punch* office, and there he was compelled to halt. To cross the street was simply impossible. Deeply buried in the dense throng, he stood for quite an hour watching his friends at the windows. He could even hear, now and again, a peal of laughter and the ring of their merry voices. 'By the Gods,' mused the comedian, 'I'm missing an enormous treat! I must get across this street by hook or by crook—but how?'

"Happy thought! At that moment he saw a policeman. He worked his way towards him, and said—

"'Bobby, if you'll manage to take me across the street to the *Punch* office I'll give you a sovereign.'

"The policeman simply smiled, and pointed to the impenetrable throng.

"'I know it will be tough work, and perhaps I may lose my coat and hat in the struggle,' pursued Sothern; 'but it's most important that I should be there with my friends.'

"'I've no doubt of it, sir; but it's impossible. Why, you might as well ask me to take you through the walls of St. Paul's there.'

"'Nonsense,' urged Sothern, with irrepressible persistence. 'You are a tall, strong man—I'm thin and wiry; if you'll open the way, I'll follow, and it's to be done with a little effort. Look here (*whisper*), get me over, and I'll give you a five-pound note!'

"At this offer the policeman shut one eye, rubbed

his ear, puckered his lips, elevated his nose, stood on tiptoe, and surveyed the scene before him.

“ ‘Brace yourself for a mighty effort,’ said Sothern, encouragingly.

“He made an effort, but without success. The crowd instantly howled with one voice, ‘Back, back, Bobby, back! Where are you shovin’ to?’

“At that moment Dickens and Brooks came to the window, each with a glass of champagne in his hand, looked out, surveyed the scene, and then retired, radiant with some observation made by the author of ‘Pickwick.’ This tableau was too much for Lord Dundreary—to miss all the brilliant talk of that morning—to miss being presented to some of the most gifted men on earth!—he would make one last effort. ‘Policeman,’ whispered he, ‘have you got a pair of handcuffs? I’ll strike you. Arrest me. Shout—“A pickpocket—I’ve got him!” Drag me across—the crowd will take up the cry and make way—that’s the programme—here’s the money in advance!’ The policeman was a huge, strapping member of the force. It was the work of an instant. Into his pocket went the note; out came the handcuffs. Sothern made a plunge at the breast of the man, who literally hurled himself at the crowd, dragging his victim after him. Off went hats, down fell half-a-dozen people not physically gifted, and after three minutes’ hard

fighting with the most savage opposition, the twain landed on the steps of the *Punch* office.

“To say that there was a yell of execration at the policeman for his vigorous *coup de main* would faintly describe the howl that went up from the crowd. It reminded one of that volume of sound heard on a Derby Day, when the favorite shoots past the winning-post. *Punch* was the word in more senses than the journal implied. There were punched heads, punched hats, to say nothing of ribs and noses, and Sothern and the bold blue ‘Bobby’ sought rapid refuge within the hospitable portals of the Fleet street humorist.

“Happily, at that moment a loud voice shouted, ‘The prince is coming—or-*der*!’ and the excitement lulled. The comedian made his way up to his friends, related the incident, and quaffed a glass of champagne, which was held to his lips by Mark Lemon. While this was going on, Cruikshank, always ready for a joke, wheedled the policeman out of a back door into a side street, with strict instructions not to return until after the procession had passed; and Sothern saw the show, made some charming new acquaintances, partook of his lunch, and uttered his cry of welcome to the pretty Princess—firmly bound in strong iron bracelets.

“Millais chaffingly suggested a grand historical picture for the Academy—‘Lord Dundreary in Fetters at

the Great Welcoming of the Beautiful Bride.' Shirley Brooks insisted that a French dramatist would have got a Palais Royal farce out of the incident, and Sothern consoled himself with the reflection that he was the only person of the millions present who witnessed the pageant in handcuffs.

A CRITICISM ON "THE CRUSHED," BY MR. GEORGE
W. CHILDS, OF THE "PHILADELPHIA LED-
GER," JAN. 21, 1878.

"When a new, distinct and enjoyable character is created by author and actor for the dramatic stage, it has good title to take rank among other works of art. It is in many respects just such a creation as an accepted masterpiece of sculpture, or a finished painting, or a grand piece of music, to which the cultivated mind pays homage of admiration for the skill, the study, the talent, or the genius displayed in the achievement. Something like this is done by Mr. Sothern in the study and representation of his De Lacy Fitz Altamont, the 'Crushed Tragedian,' now on the stage of the Walnut Street Theatre. This new character stands out like a statue, or the central figure of a life-like picture. It is not only distinct from all others of the characters with which our dramas are peopled, but it is as opposite as possible to Dundreary, that other creation of Mr. Sothern with



which his fame as a dramatic artist is so largely identified, and there is not the faintest flavor of Mr. Sothern's own individuality in it.

"The characterization, however, belongs to the same class of original studies worked out to the next thing to perfection by the artist, and with such other works as Jefferson's 'Rip Van Winkle,' Charles Kean's 'Louis XI.,' and Charlotte Cushman's 'Meg Merrilies.'

"It is not our purpose to describe the 'Crushed Tragedian.' It would require a good deal of study to do even that in a satisfactory way. The play must be seen and heard to be understood, and it will be the better enjoyed by those who go to see it if they have no detailed description. It may be said, however, that, notwithstanding the 'dejected 'havior of the visage' of the Crushed Tragedian, and his inky habiliments, very seedy and baggy, and the many set-backs he suffers in pursuing the pet ambition of his life, his expression of his professional woes is so grotesque and ludicrous that the audience is in one continuous strain of laughter so long as he is on the stage. Then there is a meaning in the play for those who prefer, above intellect and true art, the poor tawdry stuff and humbug of which so much of the modern stage is made up."

A ROW AT THE GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL.

Perhaps the most famous of all the practical jokes with which Mr. Sothern had to do was the "Texan banquet," given to a gentleman at the Gramercy Park Hotel, in this city, during the month of December, 1872. It made a great stir at the time, and even led to an immense deal of serio-comic talk about duels. A young, good-natured English tourist had been made to believe, since his arrival here, a great many things which had absolutely no foundation in fact. Some of these matters were thoroughly ridiculous. In brief, he, moving in the upper ranks of dramatic society, had fallen into the hands of some of the most dreadful practical jokers in New York, so that very speedily he must have had the most curious medley of ideas possible to a traveler concerning life and society customs here. "Among the leading practical jokers with whom he came in contact, may be mentioned," said the chronicles of the time, "William J. Florence, E. A. Sothern, and others of lesser prominence." Well, to do honor to Mr. —, Sothern gave a splendid banquet at his rooms, in the Gramercy Park Hotel. It was on a Sunday afternoon. Covers were laid for twelve, Mr. Sothern presiding, and the guest of the evening, Mr. —, sitting at the right, Nelse Seymour at the foot of the table, and Dan Bryant at the left of the guest. The guests were all in

evening dress. The dinner was a sumptuous one, and well served ; the wines were of rich and rare vintages. Hardly a smile rippled over the face of anyone present, although indeed some remark was made when Mr. Gaylor took from under his coat a paper battle-ax—the broad blade being covered with tinfoil—such as is used to kill tyrants on the stage. While the soup was being served, Mr. Neil Bryant drew from beneath the back collar of his coat a dirk-knife, the blade of which was over a foot long, which he solemnly unclasped and placed beside his plate. Mr. Chris Connor took a six-shooter from his coat-tail pocket, and laid it down carelessly on the table. Mr. ——— looked around in a bewildered way. Nelse Seymour drew a scythe from under the table and then a policeman's club, and laid them in the middle of the board. At this Mr. ——— began to move very uneasily, and whispered to his friend, Mr. Sothern :

“ Old fellow, what *does* this mean ? ”

“ Keep quiet,” replied Sothern, “ it is as I have feared. These gentlemen have been drinking, and they have quarrelled about a friend of theirs, a Mr. Weymyss Jobson, quite an eminent scholar, and a very estimable gentleman ; but I hope, for our sakes, that they will not attempt to settle their quarrel here. It is dreadful, but I hope, dear boy, that they will go away quietly and have no row. It is a fashion they have here to settle their disputes at a table, or wher-

ever they meet. All we can do now is to await events."

"But there will be murder here. Can we not notify the police of their intentions?"

"Impossible, my dear fellow," answered Sothern, in a distressing whisper. "Were you even to be suspected by these men of attempting to leave the room you would be shot like a dog, and no satisfaction would ever be given your relatives in a court of justice." By this time Mr. — was thoroughly aroused, and in no mood for tasting even the first course. "What an infernal country!" he said, in a whisper. For a few moments the regular banquet business went on, when suddenly a row arose at the lower end of the table, and Mr. Neil Bryant, springing to his feet, fiercely exclaimed: "Whoever says that the 'History of the French Revolution' written by my friend, David Weymyss Jobson, is not as good a book in every respect as that written by Tom Carlyle on the same subject, is a liar, a thief, and if there is any fool present who desires to take it up, I am his man!" All the guests rose suddenly, and every one grasped his weapon. Chris Connor roared, as he seized his pistol: "You are another, Bryant, and by my halidome I will prove it on your treacherous body." Then shots were fired, and the room was filled with smoke and uproar. Several of the guests clinched and struggled, and Nelse Seymour,

while struggling across the table, thrust his foot into the eight-quart soup tureen, made a wild plunge, but was knocked down, and then found it impossible to release his foot from the vessel. Mr. — ran to the door, but the conspirators had locked it. Billy Florence thrust a long knife into Mr. — hands, and cried out : “ defend yourself ! This is butchery—sheer butchery ! ” Sothern kept saying continually to Mr. — : “ Keep cool, and don’t get shot ! This is awful—a thousand pardons—I am a stranger in the country, and I had no expectation of meeting these demons at a dinner given to my friend ! ” The hotel, in the meantime, had been alarmed, and the guests and waiters, outside, were making frantic endeavors to break open the doors, fearing that murder would be done. It is almost needless to say that the whole row was a practical joke upon the guest of the evening, who had brought it on himself by boasting about the swell letters of introduction he had brought from London. Sothern told him his letters were all to the wrong class of people, but that he would ask some of the really first raters—Knickerbockers—to meet him. Shortly afterwards he met Florence and begged him to select some of the drollest nigger minstrels. Florence did so, and gave them instructions what to do. The joke was finally spoiled, however, by one circumstance. Seymour, when knocked down by some minstrel trick, instantly

rubbed burnt cork over his left eye, and rose seemingly badly damaged. But he forgot himself and rubbed the cork off, and Mr. —, recovering from his fright, and seeing through the affair, decidedly turned the tables by taking his hat, and saying, with an exquisite drawl: "Gentlemen, I am extremely obliged to you for this evening's entertainment, which has had both tragedy and comedy combined. This has really been the best negro minstrel performance I have ever seen in America, and fully equals any that I have seen given at St. James' Hall in my own city of London. Good evening, gentlemen!" and so saying he gracefully bowed himself out of the room.

SOTHERN IN AN ENGLISH RAILWAY CAR.

Mr. John T. Raymond relates the following incident as strictly true:

"Sothorn and I were going from Glasgow to Birmingham. While walking on the platform of the railway station he purchased a handful of cigars, a portion of which he handed to me, with the remark, 'Now, John, when we get into the compartment, if there's anybody present but ourselves, let's be strangers, but be ready for any fun that turns up.' When I entered, I found the place occupied by a couple of well-to-do English gentlemen—matter-of-fact, solid-looking men, you know—who were ap-

parently friends and fellow-travelers. As soon as the train started, feeling in my pocket, I produced a cigar and turning to the gentlemen, asked :

“‘Do you object to smoking?’ They replied in the negative. I then turned to Sothern who was sitting on the other side, and with a polite bow, inquired:

“‘Do *you* object to smoke, sir?’

“‘I do,’ he replied, with an air of offended dignity, ‘I do most assuredly. It’s a piece of impertinence to ask such a question.’”

“‘I beg your pardon,’ I said, ‘I am only an American gentleman, and quite unused to the customs of your country.’”

“‘That’s easy enough to see, sir; you’re either an American or a fool, sir. We don’t do things like that in England.’

“I sank back in my corner as if half frightened to death, while Ned indulged in a series of indignant mutterings well calculated to show that he was suffering from a severe attack of choler. At this the two Englishmen grew angry at his manner, and expressed themselves to each other accordingly. After the thing had run along for a few minutes, Sothern quietly took from his pocket a cigar, lighted it, and proceeded to smoke in the most nonchalant way, and as oblivious to his surroundings as if there were not another person within a thousand miles. The Englishmen looked at each other, then at me,

then at him, and the more they looked, the more indignant they seemed to become. They saw that I was a small and inoffensive man, too small to fight this fellow—and with the natural desire to see fair play, which belongs to all true Britishers, they finally opened on Sothern. They talked at him, and around him, and finally to him, directly. They tried to make him put the cigar out; explain himself; apologize; swore they would call the guard, and threatened all kinds of things, but there sat Ned imperturbable and silent as a sphynx coolly puffing away at his havana, and filling the compartment with smoke. In the midst of this wordy warfare, the train arrived at a station. Ned bestowed a well-assumed contemptuous look on the two Englishmen, and taking me by the arm, said:

“‘Come, John, let’s get out and take a stretch on the platform. We’ll leave these brutes to themselves for a while.’

“You should have seen the rage written on their faces. They seized their shawls and packages and followed us as if they intended some sort of summary punishment, no matter what came of it; but meanwhile Sothern had quietly ‘tipped’ the guard, secured another apartment, and as the train moved off, the two gentlemen were left standing on the platform evidently feeling cheaply sold at my parting remarks to that effect from the car window.”

A BREAKFAST PARTY WITH TOOLE.

On the special train that whirled the participants in Edwin Adams' benefit from New York to Philadelphia in ninety-nine and a half minutes, Mr. Sothern related to Miss Lotta, her mother, Mrs. Crabtree, and a little group, the following anecdote :

He said that, "On one occasion, Mr. Toole and myself were breakfasting with a party of friends at an inn at Greenwich. No sooner had the waiter left the room for an instant than I proposed that we should remove the plate from the cloth, and get under the table. This we did without loss of time, taking every article of silver-ware from the table, down to the spoons, and throwing open the window. After a while the door opened and the waiter reappeared.

"'Hallo !' he cried, seeing the company gone, also the silver, and the window wide open, 'here's a rum go ! I'm blessed if they arn't run away with the silver ! Here, Dick (to a waiter who was passing), the gentlemen 'as run away with the silver ! Help me find the guv'nor !' With that he made a hasty exit, whereupon the party resumed their places, after shutting down the window and replacing the dishes, the knives, the forks and the spoons. When the 'guv'nor' appeared, breathless and cursing, not loud, but deep, he found a party of gentlemen in the full possession of his silver-ware, quietly discussing the fish, for the

preparation of which his hostelry was noted. His ejaculation of rage changed to astonishment and relief.

“‘Eh, what,’ said he, ‘everything secure. Why, James, you blarsted rascal, what do you mean?’

“‘So help me, guv’nor——’ protested the mystified garcon.

“‘You’re drunk, you idiot,’ said the incredulous master.

“‘Gentlemen, I beg your pardon. I will withdraw,’ and we veiled our mirth with the napkins, and a smile of forgiveness stole over each innocent face.

A BREAKFAST AT THE CONTINENTAL HOTEL, PHILADELPHIA.

“One morning at breakfast in the public room in the Continental Hotel, Philadelphia, I observed,” said Mr. Sothern, “an old gentleman, who was obviously very much annoyed at the delay of the waiter in bringing his breakfast. He was continually looking at his watch and apparently muttering oaths of abdominal origin. For some time I paid little attention to the party, but at last becoming interested, I asked the head waiter who he was. He told me it was Gen’l So-and-So, an irascible old bachelor—one of the regular boarders in the house. While waiting for my own breakfast, I had emptied my pockets of the letters

which I had to acknowledge that morning, and among them found what we call a 'property letter,' that had accidentally found its way among my own papers. A property letter, you know, means a letter used on the stage, and this one read as follows :

“‘Young man, I know thy secret. If thou hast wit, courage and discretion, I can secure the realization of thy most sanguine hopes.

(Signed)

“‘BEAUSEANT.’

“It is the letter which Claude Melnotte reads in the *Lady of Lyons*. It struck me on the instant that I would enclose it in an envelope, send it to the old gentleman, and watch the effect ; so, calling one of the waiters—a colored man—I told him to go outside in the hall, remain for five minutes and then return and deliver the letter, saying that the writer would call for a reply during the day. I also instructed the waiter after giving this message to retire quickly and not be seen again in the hotel until the next day, and that I would make it all right with his chief.

“Agreeably to my instructions, in a few minutes the servant walked up to the General and put the letter in his hands. The old gentleman adjusted his spectacles, tore open the envelope, and in an amazed tone commenced to read half aloud : ‘Young man, I know thy secret,’ and so on. He read it over two or three times and I never saw anybody more bewildered. At last he called for the head waiter and demanded to

see the servant who had delivered the letter ; of course he was not to be found. The longer he pondered the more he looked as if he wanted to rave. In the meantime, in came his breakfast.

“ ‘D——n the breakfast !’ he exclaimed, almost kicking over the table. ‘I want to see the lunatic who calls me “a young man,” and says he “knows my secret, and can secure the realization of my fondest hopes.” I haven’t got any secret, and my fondest hope is to kick the idiot who sent me this insane note.’

“During this time, two or three ladies had joined me at the breakfast table, and noticing the extraordinary excitement of the General, asked me if I knew who he was. I told them to keep very quiet, and not to attract his attention ; that he was a fratricide, and an escaped lunatic, whose keepers were outside behind the doors waiting for him, and that the letter was only a decoy to enable them to secure him without unnecessary violence. This thoroughly alarmed the ladies, and they hurriedly left the table, retreating through the door at the other end of the room.

“At this movement the second head waiter, who had noticed the agitation of the ladies, walked up to me, and asked if they were not satisfied with their breakfast.

“‘Oh, yes,’ I replied, ‘I presume so ; but the youngest lady is a dangerous maniac at times, and the in-

stant she saw her father, Gen'l So-and-So, disturbed in his mind by the letter she had written, I whispered to her friend to take her out of the room.'

"In a few moments, having finished my breakfast, I took my own departure. On reaching the office of the hotel, I inquired of one of the principal clerks whether his head waiter was quite sound in his mind. He asked me my reason for making the inquiry. I said that I didn't want to get my name mixed up in the matter, but it struck me that the one weak point of his intellect was his apparently intense dislike to the General, and I observed to the clerk, 'Just test it by going up to him suddenly, and saying, "Don't you think you will get yourself into trouble about that letter of the General's?"'"

"After breakfast Mr. ———, the clerk, walked up to the head waiter and abruptly made that remark. Of course the waiter got very much confused and stammered as a man naturally would under the circumstances, in endeavoring to make an explanation, whereupon I, who was behind him, intimated by signs to the clerk that he had better get out of the way as the fellow had a knife about him and might become very violent.

"In the meantime I saw the General approach the office to make inquiries, and in a minute or two there was a tremendous hum of conversation. Half a dozen men were talking loudly and excitedly together among

whom were the clerk and the two principal waiters of the hotel. I hastily paid my bill, seized my travelling satchel, jumped into a coach at the door, and was driven away. I never learned what was the result, because I never dared to inquire; but for an hour or two it was a pretty lively edition of the 'Hornet's Nest in one buzz and a stinger.'

HOW TO MAKE AN ACQUAINTANCE.

"It is curious what a little thing will lead up to a lively joke. A friend of mine once observed to me, 'Ned, there's a lovely girl with whom I desire to become acquainted, but I don't know how to get introduced to her. What would you do under the circumstances?'

"I thought a moment, and asked in a confidential sort of a way, 'What's her address?'

" 'So and so,' he replied, giving it to me.

" 'Is she prudish?' I inquired.

" 'How on earth can I tell?'

"That night I sat down and wrote: 'Mr. Sothern's compliments to Miss ——, and in answer to her letter states that he would be most happy to lend any other horse but his mare Kate, who is rather vicious and might involve some danger to her person.'

"In reply I received a note stating that she had never written to Mr. Sothern about a horse or any-

thing else. I at once wrote back begging leave to enclose a letter which I had got a lady friend of mine to copy. She wrote back immediately that the letter was a forgery, whereupon I rejoined : 'Mr. Sothern presents his compliments, begs leave to say that he has been the victim of a practical joke, and in order to redeem himself from any suspicion of intentional offense, has put the matter in the hands of Sergeant Smith of Scotland Yard.'

"In a few hours back came another message from her, praying that I would do no such thing, inasmuch as it would seriously compromise her by giving unnecessary publicity to a very simple thing, and adding, 'Let me see you.' I then wrote that I never made any calls until after theatre hours ; that the investigation must be pressed, and I preferred her to see Sergeant Smith. She wrote again, earnestly requesting me to keep it out of the hands of the police, under any and all circumstances. Would I not grant her an interview? she would call at any time. I answered her last note, saying that I appreciated the situation in which she was placed, and would be very glad to see her in my parlors at half-past five of the ensuing day. She came ; I stood on my dignity for a while, and then explanations followed, more theoretical than truthful on my part, but I reluctantly agreed not to put the matter into the hands of Sergeant Smith. The up-shot was, that the

next day both of us were driving out behind that same vicious mare, Kate. My friend happened to see us at Richmond, and when he soon afterwards met me, he exclaimed, with a look of astonishment on his face :

“‘How’s this, Sothern? didn’t I see you driving that lady in the park? I didn’t know that you knew her.’

“‘Why,’ I replied, ‘of course you didn’t; but don’t you see it was necessary that I should know her first, or how the mischief could I introduce you? That’s the reason I made her acquaintance—and she’s as witty as she is beautiful.’

“‘Well,’ he replied, in a dazed sort of way; ‘if this isn’t the most brazen piece of impudence I ever heard of.’ After keeping him on tenter hooks for a while I explained the whole matter to him, and the three of us subsequently met over a jolly spread in my rooms when the desired introduction was at last effected. I’m not sure that he has not since married the lady and gone into the nursery business.”

BEGGING LETTERS.

One of the gentlemen present asked the question of Mr. Sothern, whether in the course of his professional experience he was not largely afflicted by begging letters.

“Yes,” said he, “from the way they pour in upon me one would imagine I was a second George Peabody, a John Jacob Astor, or Baron Rothschild. They refer to every possible subject, give every possible reason why I should exhaust my exchequer, and nine out of ten are written by professional medicants. Now and then when I imagine that one of these letters bears the stamp of sincerity, I have my valet investigate the circumstances, and endeavor to do what I can for the unhappy party ; but in the main these people are a class of impostors. Still I have been deceived on several occasions. One of these I recall at this moment. Some years ago I was with my family on the lawn in front of my house at Kensington, when a gentlemanly-looking person came up and said : ‘ Excuse me, sir, for addressing you, but in changing my clothes at the hotel I forgot my purse. It was very stupid of me, of course, but as I was passing I saw you on the lawn, and recognizing you, determined to take the risk of being placed in a false position by making known the circumstance.’ He further remarked, ‘ I am an Edinburgh man and know quite a number of your friends, though we have personally not been formally introduced. Unfortunately, too,’ he observed, ‘ I am suffering a good deal from rheumatism, and have about three miles to walk. It struck me that under the circumstances you would not object to lending me a half crown until I

reach the end of my destination, when I will send the amount back by messenger.'

"I loaned the fellow the half crown and asked him to join our party, take a glass of wine and a cigar. In the most gentlemanly manner, however, he refused, said he must be moving on, shook hands with me, took off his hat to the ladies, and gracefully bowed himself out of the company.

"The truth is he didn't know a solitary individual among the parties whose names he had mentioned as mutual friends, and I never heard of him again."

SOTHERN AS REMEMBERED BY ONE OF HIS OLD FRIENDS.

Mrs. J. R. Vincent, a veteran actress on the Boston stage, has furnished the editor with many pleasant recollections concerning the early career of Mr. Soth-ern in America, and although her comments are occasionally somewhat flattering, they will doubtless be found to be interesting. She says :

"I appeared in 1852 at the old National Theatre, Boston, on the night previous to its destruction by fire, as Lady Sneerwell in the 'School for Scandal.' After the burning, we finished the week with Messrs. Sinclair and Vandenhoff, at the Federal Street Theatre, and from there went to the Boston Museum, where I have since remained. About this time, a Mr.

Lacy sent out from England a young man, who brought letters of introduction from Charles Kean, Lord Lytton Bulwer, Sergeant Talford, and other people who had seen him play, and who wrote of him in language of extreme praise. His name was Douglas Stuart. He was tall, willowy and lithe, with a clear, red and white, English complexion; bright blue eyes; wavy, brown hair; graceful in his carriage, and well calculated physically to conciliate the heart of any susceptible woman. He lived at the same house with me, and I soon found that he had all the simplicity and buoyancy of a child. He was not rich—anything but that—but invariably charitable and generous to the extent of prodigality.

“He entered at once upon his professional duties, at the new National Theatre, under the management of Mr. Leonard, a celebrated auctioneer of Boston, and appeared as Dr. Pangloss. His opening night was not a success. You can fancy the appearance of a boy on the stage. I should say he was three or four and twenty, but behind the footlights he did not look as if he were more than sixteen. He had a singularly sweet voice; much better then than it is now. Playing *Dundreary*, and ‘*The Crushed Tragedian*,’ have probably hardened it, and destroyed that nice shade of emphasis which then enabled him to give a tender expression in pathetic parts.

“Mr. Stuart’s next move was to the Howard

Athæneum where he received a salary I think of twenty or twenty-five dollars a week. I remember an incident that occurred at this period which illustrates a phase of his character to which I have just referred. One of the actors by the name of Sneider, a quiet, well behaved, inoffensive man, who was very poor, was suddenly taken ill. Stuart, or rather let us call him Sothern, learning this fact, went to the quarters of Sneider, where he found the friendless, penniless fellow more dead than alive, in a miserable back attic, and became his constant nurse. Apparently he was in the last stages of consumption, and but for the care, comfort and attention rendered by his new found friend he probably would have died. I have seen him two or three times within a few years and he never fails to speak in the most extravagant terms of the kindness and affection showed him during that sickness.

“The first impression produced by Mr. Sothern as an actor was not a favorable one. The truth is, he had been over praised. Mr. Leonard, the manager, had announced it in advance that he was going to bring to America the greatest actor that had ever appeared on its stage, and thus had aroused the expectations of the people to such a degree that they were naturally disappointed; hence his failure. Besides, he was not old enough to make a sensation. He couldn’t even make up properly, although his elocution

was correct, and he was perfect in whatever part he undertook. I don't remember the different pieces that he played, yet I recall the fact that they were remarkably well done for so young a man. But, oh, how sensitive he was, especially when the papers cut him up, which they did without stint.

"In all Mr. Sothern's personal dealings he was the soul of honor, always having a strict regard for truth. I remember that when he left our house he hadn't the money with which to travel and pay his expenses to New York; but there was one of my servant girls who had deposited with me for safe keeping some funds of her own amounting I think, to forty or fifty dollars, and with her consent I offered him that sum. After he reached New York and was able to save up some money of his own, one of the first things he did was not only to return the amount borrowed, but to send a dress to the girl, the value of which was more than half the sum loaned.

"The worst habit he had at that time was drinking strong coffee, which he did at night after his return from the theatre, and he insisted on never drinking alone. If I or the other people in the house had retired, he would seize the dinner bell and go prancing up and down the premises ringing like a madman until somebody turned out to keep him company in the dining-room. Ah, many is the jolly story and glorious laugh we had over those cups of midnight coffee.

“ One night he was in more than usual exuberant spirits, but I had gone to bed very tired ; he rang the bell, he pounded at the door, he announced that if I didn't come down stairs he would frighten me in the most dreadful manner. ‘ I'll light blue fire,’ said he, ‘ I'll throw a skeleton through the ventilator, I'll tie all the neighborhood cats together and hang them to your door knob ; I'll sound Chinese gongs, explode a can of gunpowder, and raise the neighborhood generally unless you come out of that room.’ Of course I had to do so and make his coffee. He was simply a big, overgrown, sympathetic, jolly boy. Having no relatives of my own I have always thus looked upon him more as a son than anything else, and up to this hour he has been as filial and devoted to me as if in truth he were my own child.

“ In a social point of view he had much the same characteristics then as now. He was always fond of animals, and had cats, dogs and birds around him by the score. He is so full of magnetism that nearly all kinds of pets take to him naturally, by instinct, as it were, and he in turn clings to them with all the affection of a woman. He is very tender and domestic in his feelings and has a strong partiality for home associations. If he has a personal fault, it is that now and then he emphasizes rather strongly, but he does even this in such an easy, spontaneous way, that the most refined of his guests will forgive the breach.

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES.

“Perhaps you never heard of Sothern’s spiritual experience,” writes the old lady. “Well, one Saturday evening—by the way, we did not play on Saturday evenings then—we took it into our heads to have some amusement of our own, and I proposed to go to the spirit knockers. Sothern caught at the idea eagerly and we started off. Not knowing the street in which they resided we were obliged to apply at every house for two or three blocks, Sothern good-naturedly assuming the role of an unsophisticated countryman.

“At last, however, we found the spot, and fortunately I was recognized by the inmates of the house. A circle had already been formed around the table and we were invited to take seats and join them. Sothern pretended to be intensely excited—I never saw him more so. He scrutinized all the surroundings closely, asked a great many questions, and went home apparently quite serious and bewildered. He was particularly amused by the husband of the medium, who, opening the window in the apartment, at 10 o’clock, declared with a solemn air that the spirits had departed—that they couldn’t stay any longer. He got up and went to the window to observe where they had gone, and you never saw so surprised a man.

“The next evening Gustavus V. Brooke, the tragedian, who was very intimate with Mr. Sothern, came to the house, and making up a large party we repeated our visit to the rappers. Brooke was likewise very much affected by what he saw, and shed tears, confessing that the spiritualists had described home scenes and incidents that were unknown to anybody but himself. When we returned from the place that night, Sothern remarked: ‘Now I propose to devote my life to finding out what this infernal mystery is. I believe it’s a humbug, and I’ll know it and that right soon. I observe that the man always opens the window to let the spirits out about the same time every evening—I think I can make them stay. You wait and see!’

“A fortnight or more passed away during which we had seances at my own house for the purpose of discovering if possible, how the raps were produced. One evening the medium suddenly turned round, and exclaiming that she was tired, opened the window as usual and remarked that the spirits had gone. ‘Stop!’ said Mr. Sothern, ‘they have not gone. They are still present, and I hear them at this moment distinctly.’ Sure enough, the raps were immediately reproduced in a louder and more emphatic manner than we had ever heard them before. ‘I believe I can do even better,’ said Sothern, without cracking a smile. ‘We’ll have the

spirit rap out "Yankee Doodle," and "God Save the Queen."

"The poor medium almost fainted. You never saw any one so much cut up. Thereupon Sothern proceeded to give intelligent answers to all the questions propounded, and mystified us more completely than we had been before. When he finished he turned to the company and said: 'Now you see for yourselves—this woman is an arrant humbug.' From that time on, he produced the most wonderful effects. I don't know how he did it, but perhaps he will tell you himself.

"I remember that one day at dinner everything on the table commenced dancing, until at last the table itself moved off around the room in a genuine can-can. On another occasion, Mr. Tom Hind, the husband of Mrs. Knight, who has lately been playing with John Brougham, said: 'My dear sir, I trust you don't expect me to believe any of this nonsense.' 'I don't care whether you do or not,' said Mr. Sothern, 'I only know there it is.' They then sat down, and in less than half an hour Hind was sobbing bitterly before everybody, and fancying that the spirit of his father, and that of his dead brother, were answering his questions. He said he even felt them clasp his hands and knees, and smoothe his hair. Among other things, he asked his father if he was unhappy on account of an estrangement which existed between himself and a

living brother. The spirit told him 'Yes,' and recommended a reconciliation, which Hind then and there promised, although it was a brother who had injured him, and the concession should have come from that side of the house.

"Another day Joe Jefferson came into the place and said: 'You may talk to me for a year, but can't make me believe that there is anything spiritual about this thing.' The words were scarcely out of his mouth before the chair on which he was sitting commenced to move. Joe sat there, however, and was carried back and forth with astonishment depicted on every feature. I think he will remember that incident to his dying day.

"Sothorn was always full of his practical jokes at that time just as he is now. One night a very respectable old Irish woman who did our washing, came into the room.

"'Good evening, Mrs. McCarthy,' said he, 'I hope you are very well! But who in the world is that with you?'

"'Wid me!' said the astonished woman, 'why nobody, sure.'"

"'Yes, there is a man behind you; and it's your husband.'

"'Me husband! Shure, why he's dead, sir, close on to twinty year.'

"'It makes no difference, Mrs. McCarthy; there he

stands as plain as the ten fingers before me ;' and Sothern proceeded in an off-hand way to describe the dead man with the utmost accuracy.

" 'But let me see,' said Sothern, 'where did he die? That's curious! Did he die in Europe? No. In Asia? No. Ireland? No. In America? No;' then suddenly looking up: 'Why, did he die at sea.' The words were no sooner out of his mouth than the woman went down on her knees in a state of fright, and clasping her hands, exclaimed:

" 'God bless yer kind heart, sir, but for heaven's sake kape him where he is; don't let him come back.'

" 'But I can't help it,' said the joker, with a mysterious and solemn air, 'there he stands right by your side, smoking a pipe.'

'The poor woman rolled over in a dead faint, and it was some minutes before we could restore her to consciousness. When she left, Sothern kindly gave her a five-dollar bill and told her not to be alarmed, for her husband would never disturb her again. The fun of it was, that in the course of previous conversation with the washerwoman, she herself had repeated all the circumstances connected with her husband, and he, remembering them, had adroitly availed himself of the opportunity for one of his practical jests.

"On another night, in the presence of a company who had assembled to see these wonderful spiritual manifestations, he brought up the ghosts of several

departed people, in blue flames, in red flames, and yellow flames; and would you believe it, there were those present who imagined that they actually saw the spirits of their relatives and friends. Of course, it was only a trick.

GOOD DEEDS.

“On a certain occasion, one of our servants—a girl named Julia—who had concealed her few savings in a boot, accidentally threw it into the fire, and a good deal of the money was destroyed. Mr. Sothern, as soon as he found it out, not only gave her a sum to replace a portion of her loss, but insisted on going over the barrel of ashes, where the *debris* had been thrown—which he did with his own hands—and there recovered a considerable number of the bills, although in a damaged state. Taking them to a friend of his, however, who was a broker, he succeeded in getting good money for all the bills that could be recognized. The poor girl was overwhelmed with gratitude. Acts of this kind were everyday events of his private life, and I only mention an incident so simple because it illustrates his character.

RESCUING A RUNAWAY.

“During that period a singular incident occurred in

connection with the daughter of quite a distinguished public official. It had been announced in the papers of the day that she had run away dressed in boy's clothes. One evening Mr. Sothern came home in a state of great excitement, saying that while at the house of a friend of his who was a medium, he had observed what seemed to be a boy of effeminate appearance, and that recalling the circumstances which had been made public, he determined to watch the unknown person closely, and if possible learn her history. Before the sitting was over his suspicions were confirmed by the discovery that the supposed boy was in reality a young girl. She made a frank, full confession to him, and the next day he sought her out in her lodgings, and finding her to be in a state of destitution, supplied her wants, paid her bills, and eventually secured her return to her home. It appears that she was in the habit of going to the medium's house to consult the spirit of her mother, and if possible find out through this means the whereabouts of the man by whom she had been deceived, and whose life it was her intention to take. I saw the girl myself, and she told me that her new found friend had more convinced her of the error of her ways than all the clergymen in Boston could have done.

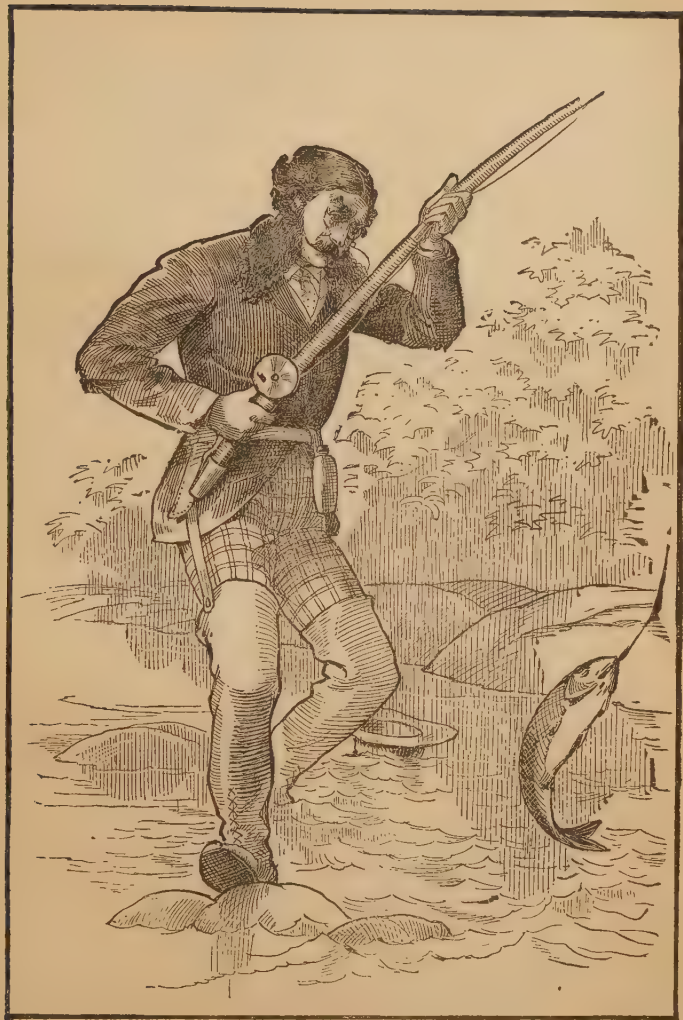
ONLY AN ACTOR.

“Coming home from the National Theatre one night, Sothern went through the unique experience of being robbed. As he was passing along Merrimac street he was seized by three men, dragged into an alley, and gagged. While searching for his valuables, the light of a bull’s eye lantern being thrown upon his face, he was at once recognized as ‘Stuart, the actor.’ One of the fellows said : ‘Oh, let him go ; he is one of the profession ; a public man ; he isn’t worth going through, anyhow.’ Whereupon they restored to him his ring and money, and making him promise not to divulge the affair, they released him, and he was allowed to proceed.

LAURA KEENE.

“While in New York, and before he made any hit, he had a dispute with Laura Keene, concerning some trivial affair at rehearsal, and she became highly excited. After a brief quarrel on the stage, she retired to her dressing-room, and still angry, sent for him and commenced to rate him roundly. Sothern said to her : ‘Stop ! Laura—stop just a minute !’ and advancing to the light, deliberately turned it down.

“‘What do you mean by that, sir ?’ said she, in a rage.





“‘Oh, nothing,’ rejoined Mr. Sothern, “but you have always been so lovely to me that I can’t bear to look upon your beautiful face when you are in a passion. Now, go on!” She never said another word of unkindness to him during her life time.

“I was trying to recall,” writes Mrs. Vincent, in a postscript, “where I heard this anecdote, and I now remember that it was told to me by Miss Laura Keene herself, and she added that he was ‘the most impudent, audacious, good-for-nothing, good-hearted fellow,’ she ever met. That was her estimate of him when he was young, and the friendship formed during those early days continued until her death.”

SOTHERN AND HIS FISHING BOOTS.

Every summer Sothern and a party of friends are in the habit of going to Canada on a fishing and hunting jaunt. The first day the party went out last year to “cast a fly,” after their arrival at the salmon grounds, Sothern and George Holland went up the stream to find a pool that looked “fishy.” A desirable spot was soon reached, and taking their stations some sixty or seventy yards apart, they began their endeavors to hook a salmon.

The river was quite shallow in places—with a tremendously swift current, and icy cold. Both wore India rubber boots, of the kind commonly worn by

fishermen who have to wade in water, coming well up the leg inside, and on the outside quite up to the waist. They were held in place by a loop on the outside of each leg, at the waist, a belt around the body being passed through these loops. Sothern, however, seemed to have it in his mind that the boots were waist high all around, at least if one may judge from what happened.

George saw him commence to wade in, for the purpose of reaching a certain pool with his "fly"; but being busy with his own work, for the moment paid no further attention. Directly, however, Sothern was heard growling about something, and then followed a series of extraordinary ejaculations:—

"Ouch! Oh! A-h-h-h-h! Blank—blanketty—blank—blank—ooouch!!" And Sothern acted as if he had a fit of the shivering ague.

George put down his rod, and going to the edge of the water, near where Sothern was wading, said: "Hallo, Ned, what's the matter?" observing at the same time that Sothern was in pretty deep water for a man whose rubber boots only reached half way up his thighs.

"The matter," says Sothern, "Ooouch! Ah-h-h-h!! Oh! Blazes—Oh!—blanketty—blank—the blanked man that sold me these boots—Oooch!"

"Why," said George, "what's the matter with your boots?"

"Matter with 'em," replied Sothern, "why the blank things are all full of blanketty-blank holes. Oooch—Ah-h-h-h! Blank it—I'm freezing"—and he waded out.

It appears that he had gone on wading until the water reached the top of his boots, and commenced to run down inside. Ned looked to see how high they reached, but instead of investigating between his legs, he looked *outside* at his hips—where the tops of the boots were a good six inches from the top of the water—and instantly came to the conclusion that the boots were rotten, or something of the kind, and that the water was pouring through, instead of into them. When Holland understood what had really happened, he began in the wildest way to roll over and over on the ground, and as often as his laughter would permit, got rid of some remarks, such as "Well I'll be blanked—Ha! ha! ha!—Oh, Lord! Didn't know where the tops of his boots were—ha! ha! ha!" and so on, until Sothern really began to look as though he was rapidly freezing in his boots. Then George, calling the guides together, stood Ned on his head, and let the water run out.

A few pulls at a bottle of whisky somewhat warmed up the unfortunate fisherman, and he was all right again. Sothern offered Holland untold wealth, if he would "kindly not say anything to anybody about this little mistake, you know,"—but George couldn't

keep the joke, and when he told it to Billy Florence, on their return to camp, and that individual commenced to haw! haw! and howl around the place, and poke all sorts of fun at Ned, the latter immediately said: "The whole thing was a blamed lie," and that he could, "individually and collectively, thrash the whole camp." Then he went off in the woods by himself, took the trees into his confidence, and said unpleasant things about George Holland.

THE QUEBEC SPORTSMAN.

There is another incident of last summer's salmon fishing trip, described by George Holland, who was one of the party, that is worthy of being repeated. Unfortunately it is impossible to reproduce Holland's inimitable manner while telling the story. It appears that the company had arrived at Quebec from Montreal at eight o'clock in the morning, and as their ship was not to leave until two in the afternoon they had a few hours to "do" the town. Accordingly jumping in two vehicles called "caleches," they first visited the citadel and fortifications, then the falls, and finally made a tour of the city itself. After a dinner at a restaurant, finding they had still an hour for a walk, Florence, Holland and Sothorn started down the principal street to look around.

Suddenly Florence commenced to yell: "Hi, hi,

there! You—you man with the birds! Hi, hi, come here!"

Sothorn and Holland turned to see what the bluster was all about, and observed Florence wildly gesticulating to a man on the other side of the street, who was carrying a lot of birds on a string.

Sothorn said: "Florence, what the mischief is the row?"

Florence replied: "Sh-h-h-h! Birds, my boy, birds. We'll buy them from this sportsman, and take 'em down with us; it will be a pleasant change of diet. 'Broiled birds on toast,' you know."

By this time, the sportsman (?) had crossed the street and was standing before the trio. He was rather a singular sort of a fellow, and withal a German. His face was about as expressive as a bologna sausage, and though not deaf, it seemed to take minutes for each inquiry to reach his understanding. This at first made Florence think he couldn't hear.

Billy opened the negotiations by asking: "Do you want to sell your birds?"

The Teutonic sportsman, after a long, dull look, replied, "Vot?"

"I say," repeated Billy, much louder, "do you want to sell your birds?"

The same long, dull look from the man, and then he drawled out: "Vell, yes, I dink I sells dem."

"Well, how much for them?"

"Vot?" with the same stolidity as before.

"I say how much for them?" howled Florence.

"You buy dem?"

"Of course I'll buy them. How much do you want for them?"

"You buy dem *all*?"

"Yes, yes, I'll buy them all. Come now, let's finish the bargain."

"Vot?" with the same stupid look.

"Oh, Lord!" said Billy, now getting red in the face. "What a stupid fellow! Look here, how much for the birds?"

The vender of game for the first time seemed to understand, for he commenced very slowly, and in the most exasperating way to deliberately count his miserable bunch. Florence was getting very impatient, and just going to bawl out again, when the man looked at him as before, and slowly remarked:—

"Vell! I sells dem for two dollar."

"All right," said Billy. "Now, where did you shoot them?"

"Vot?"

"I say, where did you shoot them?"

"Vere I shood 'em?"

"Yes, where?"

"I shood dem out mit der woods. Vould you dink I shood birds in my front barlour?"

This rather staggered Billy, and they all commenced

to laugh at him, for he was now the color of a boiled lobster, but yelling at the top of his voice, he replied :

"Why, of course ; I suppose you shot them in the woods, but *how* did you shoot them ?"

"Vot ?"

"I say, *how did you shoot them ?*"

"*How* I shood 'em ?"

"Yes, *how ?* Did you shoot them on the *wing ?*"

"Vot ?"

"Did you shoot them on the WING ?"—howling in his ear.

"I shood 'em on der *wing ?*"

"Yes, on the *wing*." And here Florence went through a pantomime with his arms to describe a bird using his wings.

The sportsman, gravely looked at Billy for a moment, and then replied :

"Vell. I ain'd barticular ; some I shoods on der wing, some I shoods on der head, and some I shoods on der tail. Id's all der same so long vot I got 'em." And then he looked at Billy, as though he was saying internally, "Vot idea ; shood birds in der wing ; vot vool man !"

Billy bought the birds and left instantly, observing that he felt sure gunning as a high art did not flourish in Canada.

A PHRENOLOGICAL SEANCE.

One of the most interesting of the many breakfast parties presided over by Mr. Sothern, during the summer of this year, 1878, was one given at an adjacent watering place, at which were present as choice a company of conversational spirits as ever gathered around the mahogany. Among them was a sculptor, a portrait painter, Wm. J. Florence, John McCullough, the tragedian, John T. Raymond, a witty New York judge, and a professional "bon vivant," too wealthy to lay claim to any calling in particular.

It is because one of the chief subjects of table-talk, discussed after the removal of the cloth, related to personal characteristics, and particularly to those of mine host, that a chapter is devoted to a description of Mr. Sothern, which he subsequently confessed is as true as if he had run the gauntlet of a professional phrenologist.

"Mac," the sculptor, had been dwelling with eloquent emphasis upon the thought, that, notwithstanding the Creator had constructed every man with precisely the same physical machinery, no two individuals amongst millions of human beings present exactly the same facial expression. "The remark is equally true of the configuration of the head, and that is one reason," said the artist, "why I have more or less faith in the science of phrenology."

"If that is the case," Mr. Sothern remarked, "and if you are an artist in skulls, just run your fingers through my hair and tell me something about myself."

"And keep back nothing," interposed Judge B. "We want to know what manner of man this is, who does Dundreary one day, drunken David Garrick on another, and the 'Crushed Tragedian' on a third, and equally loses his identity in each part."

"Yes," rejoined Sothern, "keep back nothing; pitch into me right and left."

The sculptor thereupon proceeded with his cranial investigation. "In the first place," said he, "the general indications of the brain are, a decided predominance of the mental over the physical. You are, therefore, more or less swayed by impulse. You are likewise excessively nervous and impatient, although when at rest delicate in your instincts and intuitions, susceptible, emotional, and sympathetic. The brain is not a large one, and I observe from the manner in which you blush that there is a tendency of blood to the head center. Physically I note also that you have a full, deep chest, with a corresponding voice, indicative of healthy lungs, and are, therefore, of an elastic, buoyant, and animated disposition. I should say you were capable of great vigor, in all the mental and bodily functions, enabling you to throw off a large amount of hard work, although afterwards a reaction is apt to follow. Let me feel your pulse.

Good ! It's slow, strong, and steady. I shouldn't think you were liable to sickness."

"Unless it's the gout !" ejaculated Judge B., parenthetically.

"Silence !" broke in Mr. Sothern, "I can digest like an ostrich."

Mac continued :—"You are much influenced by first impressions, and have strong intuitive likes and dislikes that are hard to eradicate. You throw a great amount of feeling into everything, and use forcible adjectives ; have an active and acute mind, bad business talents, a retentive memory and ready flow of ideas. You love action for its own sake, are wide-awake, versatile in talent, flexible and suggestive. Excitability is largely developed, for whilst you combine promptness, judgment and affability, you are extremely susceptible to and intensely excited by trifles. One hour you are in the attic, the next in the cellar—extremes common to all nervous temperaments. Amativeness is large, and you strongly attract and are attracted by the opposite sex ; easily win their affectionate regards and kindle their love, although innate delicacy would not allow you to ally yourself with one not possessing a thoroughly refined manner. The love of children is also finely developed, and, as regards your own, whilst you are ambitious to acquire property, it is more for the purpose of laying by a fortune for them than for the pleasure its possession may

afford to you. Still you love them too well to spoil them."

"True !" interpolated Mr. Sothern.

"Another feature which I notice in this connection is your dislike to solitude. In friendships you are warm and cordial. Benevolence is large, and coupled with alimntiveness indicates hospitality, a love of the social banquet, and delight in setting the best before friends. These faculties being combined with mirthfulness, ideality, wit and humor, give a lively and jocose turn to conversation, and are calculated to render you the life of a table. You are a frightful joker yourself, but keenly feel the successful jests of others, when you are victimized yourself."

SOTHERN.—"No ! no ! I enjoy being sold !"

"Your sense of attachment to home and home surroundings is very great, and you are not satisfied unless you have a place, whether it be a house or a mere sleeping-room in which to expend this feeling. However much of a cosmopolite you may be now, you are eagerly anticipating the time when you can settle down. Still, notwithstanding the desire to possess a permanent habitation, the memory of early friends, and the happy hours you have spent, and a wish to enjoy again the scenes of the past, will always remain strong within you and tend to draw you from your seclusion."*

* The foregoing criticism is essentially true, for amongst the many entertainments given by Mr. Sothern, none are

"The selfish propensities," continued the sculptor, "are moderately large, that is to say, you will always take good care of Number One. You have the utmost love and tenacity of life, and would cling to it with desperation, struggling determinedly against disease and death, and yet, withal, are not destitute of the moral courage enabling you to meet fate unflinchingly. In time of danger you would exhibit unusual presence of mind, coolness and intrepidity."

"Yes," observed Judge B. turning to the gentlemen present—"that was illustrated by the remark of one of the firemen on duty at the theatre the other night, when some portion of the scenery was ignited by a gas-burner. He exclaimed, 'my heavens! look at the coolness of the "Crushed," he's playing as unconcernedly as if there wasn't a scare within a mile of him.'"

"Oh! well," retorted Mr. Sothern, "there wasn't much to be frightened about. It was only a yard or two of flame, and good men around you to take care of it. Besides, there is nothing like repressing a panic at the outset."

"Anyhow," continued the sculptor, "the incident is a tribute to the truth of my diagnosis."

more delightfully memorable than those which have taken place at his own parlors in the Gramercy Park Hotel. Scores of the brightest intellects, representing all professions, have assembled here and participated in mental and gastronomic pleasures as rare as they have been unique.—
EDITORIAL NOTE.

"The bump of combativeness stands out almost like a knot, and, by the by, take it all in all, it's about the knottiest head I ever felt."

BILLY FLORENCE.—Oh, you naughty man, but we'll "set down (n) aught in malice."

JUDGE B.—I *sigh* for a rest.

BILLY FLORENCE.—What would Ned do if anybody should insult "the Crushed"?

PHRENOLOGIST.—Knock him down, sir! baste the fiend until he apologized, and perhaps the next day invite him to dinner.

BILLY FLORENCE.—Yes, I remember we were once travelling out West, when a brute of a man—a six-footer—on the cars did something to excite the ire of Ned. I think he attempted to occupy a reserved portion of the car chartered by us, and refused to move, accompanying his refusal with a torrent of offensive language, whereupon Ned moved on him like a streak of animated lightning, had the fellow on the floor before he could say Jack Robinson, polished him off splendidly, dragged him to the door of the car, pummelled him again, and when he kicked him off the platform the man looked as though he had been fighting with the walking-beam of an engine. When Ned got back to his seat he re-adjusted his eye-glasses and in his own inimitable manner drawled forth: "Tha—tha—thaath—what I call muth—muthcularr Chwistianity."

"The whole story is a wild fabrication," said Sothern.

"Yet, after all," resumed the sculptor, "Mr. Sothern is not a fighting or an aggressive man ; anything but that—but he will defend himself, his personal interests, and the character of his friends, and resent insult with a vim that will astonish any man who picks him up for a saint."

"How about his alimentary propensities?" inquired Judge B.

"Oh, I can answer that," said Larry M——, the bon vivant, who, by the by is one of the best critics in the metropolis of everything connected with social pleasure, from a choice vintage to the latest opera bouffe. "For a man of his opportunities he is the most spirituel eater I ever met with, but he makes believe he is eating and drinking in the most remarkable manner. I have known him to order the most extravagant of dishes for no other apparent purpose than see some friend enjoy the spread."

"True!" observed Sothern. "I can't bear to eat alone. For years wherever I have a fixed residence I always order dinner for two or three. 'Plain fare and plenty of friends,' that's my motto."

"Now, let me go on once more," remarked Mac. "I find here comparatively little deception or secretiveness. The consequence is that you would be a frank and open enemy, and, therefore, unreserved and

generous to a fault among your friends. This, however, does not prevent the exercise of prudence and the other qualities which belong to a successful man. There's a fair love of approbation, but in a professional sense it is so mingled with a desire to attain success that you rather invite than shrink from just criticism in matters appertaining to your art, to the end that you may avail yourself of every thought calculated to improve the same, and to aid you in creating perfect characters. Your organ of self-esteem evinces a good degree of dignity and personal respect without haughtiness, and in connection with your combativeness, firmness, and hope, shows that you rely entirely upon your own energies in cases of emergency. It would be impossible for you to be conceited or to exhibit meanness. I should say that you were inclined to be willful and thoroughly determined in purpose, not so much so, however, as to interfere with the desire that is uppermost with reference to high achievements in your profession. By the way, Mr. Sothern, I wish to pay you a compliment by remarking that you never procrastinate. 'Whatsoever your hand findeth to do, it doeth it with all its might.' In this consists one of the chief secrets of your success. You are strongly influenced by a sense of duty, but are equally exacting in this respect in your demands upon others. You are generous enough to give money freely, but in lending require the

utmost obedience to a promise. I don't think you have much veneration. You are not quick to forgive, and never forget either evil or good. I am sorry to say that hope is only moderately developed in you, but you possess a rare determination which enables you to carry forward the objects you desire to achieve. I don't think you are much given to spirituality, but are inclined to be skeptical, and to demand proof before believing; consequently you would make a first-rate investigator of spiritual phenomena. You are a benevolent man, in fact, inclined to do good too impulsively. Your disposition is to help your friends, and bring them to the front, especially in your profession. It would not do for you to be at the head of an orphan or a blind asylum, for your sympathies would exhaust your pocket-book. But for a certain amount of tenderness, which at times makes you painfully nervous, you would be a first-rate nurse. As it is you suffer in the presence of suffering almost as much as the victim. You like style, but are not ostentatious; are fond of the fine arts, and surround yourself with many of their beautiful creations. You can endure nothing that is imperfect or sensual. You are naturally ingenious, quick to accept suggestions, and apt in making improvements. Imitation is very large, and there is a certain keenness of sense that would render you a close copyist. Hence your power of mimicry. This, added to your natural love of that which is

beautiful and refined in nature or art, enables you to give a finish to every act and word, thought and feeling which you desire to express. You are satisfied with nothing that is commonplace."

THE JUDGE.—Your criticism, Mr. Phrenologist, accounts for Ned's success as an artist. Just as the cornet player produces fine shades of interpretation upon his instrument,—as the painter by a mere bit of color, gives character to his picture, or the sculptor with a stroke of his chisel, adds a line of characteristic beauty to 'the human form divine,' so Sothern, with his rare appreciation of the humorous, the pathetic, and the ludicrous, is enabled to personate, without apparent effort, those delicate outlines of humanity, that make him the actor he is. Don't you think, Ned, you do these things without knowing it.

MR. SOTHERN.—No, that's where you are mistaken. I accomplish nothing in my art without careful study and observation, although I will confess that once full of a subject, my work flows from me spontaneously. When I assume a character, I know nothing else for the time being.

THE JUDGE.—*Poeta nascitur non fit.*

"No one will deny," said the sculptor, resuming his examination, "that your organ of mirthfulness is an exceedingly large one. It is not of that character, however, that makes you the clown of a company. You always enjoy a hearty laugh at the absurdity of

others, and delight in practical jokes. Imitation and language being well developed, you are fond of narrative, and of illustrating in dress, expression, and manners, the idiosyncrasies of individuals. I should say that you have a thorough contempt for pretenders of all kinds, and are quick to discover nice shades of character in those about you, especially such as appeal to your sense of honor. You are a good judge of the various qualities and relations of material things, form correct ideas of the value of property, and make good bargains. Had your attention been turned in that direction, your constructiveness is so great that you would be successful in conducting mechanical operations. As it is, the temptation is always upon you, to re-arrange and improve your plays. You are not apt to be satisfied with what has been done even by the best of authors. I needn't tell you, or the company, that you are quick of observation, and have a matter-of-fact, common-sense tact, which makes you adaptive, in almost any of the circumstances of life by which you may be surrounded. Without seeming to do so, you observe every little thing which people say and do ; are quick to perceive beauty, perfection, deformity. Have a keen eye for colors, and a good memory of streets, localities, and places. Your location of names and dates is only moderate, hence I fancy that you keep a note-book as a matter of self-defense."

"Bless your soul !" said Mr. Sothern, "if that were not the case I should quickly be swamped !"

THE SCULPTOR.—Right in this group of organs on which I have my hand, is one which is singularly large. I refer to that which expresses order, method, system, arrangement. There are few men who observe business rules more strictly than yourself. You are particular to a fault, and frequently take more pains in keeping things around you in order than that order is absolutely worth. I think this faculty is more inherent than acquired. Had you been a business man—I mean by that a merchant, engineer, or builder of any kind, you would have been almost painfully oppressive to those around you by demanding the most punctilious observance of your rules. This same sense of propriety characterizes you on the stage and during rehearsals. Unless everything is exactly correct you are dissatisfied and will make your company go over and over again, the lines they have to say, until every word is in its right place, and every act done in conformity with what you conceive to be the requirements of the piece.

"That's very curious," said Mr. Sothern. "Did you ever see me at rehearsal ?"

"No ;" replied the sculptor, "but if there is any one thing about your head that is truthful, it is this. I am only telling you what science says and what

the conformation and combination of your head indicate."

MR. SOTHERN.—You couldn't be more exact in your observation if you were one of my stage friends, for if there is anything that I do demand in my profession, it is the utmost nicety in the rendition of the respective parts ; still I don't think I am so bad as Mr. Forrest was on one occasion, when the property man failing to have some blood at hand which had to be used in the part, the tragedian exclaimed, "Damn you, no blood ! S'death ! I will make some," and with that he cracked him on the nose and drew a copious supply from nature's own font, then rubbing his hands in the gore, rushed on the stage.

"By the way, Mr. Phrenologist, you were speaking a minute or two ago about my bump of locality, and you made a mistake. I don't believe there is a man in this room who loses himself so quickly as I do. You may think it very strange, but if I have lost myself once between Delmonico's and the Gramercy Park Hotel, I have done so a dozen times. The other night, for instance, I wandered round the adjoining square, coming out at the same place every time, without the slightest knowledge of where I was, and if a friendly policeman hadn't put me on the right track, I believe I should have been going around until daylight."

"Wine and woodcock !" suggested the judge.

"No ;" said the phrenologist, "it is not due to a deficiency in your organ of locality, but to the fact that your concentrativeness is largely developed, and you were absorbed in thought. I can well understand that you might lose yourself in broad daylight when so engaged. Upon the whole, Mr. Sothern, I should say that you were naturally absent-minded. Your literary faculties are fair, though I can't say that you have a passion for literary pursuits. Your memory is retentive, and is an unusually large cupboard of events in which humor, wit, and mirthfulness are principally stored. A pun would strike you with more force than a pious jest. If time permitted you to work in such a direction, you would excel in fiction. In fact, you have a good general memory, by which I mean one that retains anecdotes, particulars, friends, the general appearance and conversation of those friends, and the ability to associate them with facts that may have transpired."

THE JUDGE.—Seriously speaking, what do you mean by memory? Is it a thing? Has it a material existence?

THE ARTIST.—No. It's a principle growing out of a mysterious combination of the human faculties. You inhale an odor, for instance, or hear a strain of melody, or catch a passing expression of a face, and it at once recalls associations that have been buried in the cells of the brain perhaps half a generation, or

even since babyhood. I know in my own case (and I presume it is true of every one else), that in the most sudden and mysterious manner, events and incidents that occurred while I was yet behind a pinafore have re-appeared to me in my latter years with a vividness that was almost startling.

THE JUDGE.—Is it not true then that the mind is like a photographic negative which once having received its picture retains the object with a possibility of reproduction by the mere accident of association at any time through life?

MR. SOTHERN.—Gentlemen, look here; you're getting into metaphysical depths, for it is one of those things, no fellow can find out.

THE ARTIST.—Just one minute, gentlemen. There is another phase to that question. All life consists of motion. As the pebble dropped into the ocean produces a ripple that never dies, as the passage of our bodies through the air stirs its molecules into never ending motion, may it not be equally true that these very thoughts and impressions of which we have been speaking, no matter whether they found expression at the birth of civilization or later on, will sometime and somewhere be reproduced upon life's great photographic plate, so that in the great uncertain future we may perhaps hear even the sounds of the clashing swords at Marathon!

Mr. McCullough at this juncture remarked that he

was "not doing heavy tragedy just now," and taking his hat excused himself, with very evident signs of disgust.

"Now go on, Mr. Phrenologist," said Sothern.

PHRENOLOGIST.—Let me see ; what were we talking about ? Oh ! your memory. Well, as *Bardwell Slote* would say, N. C.—nuff ced. Time and tune are tolerably good with you, but you are not by any means an intuitive musician; you appreciate tender and sympathetic music more than that which is classical. You would rather hear the familiar songs you heard at your mother's knee, played upon a street organ, than listen to one of Beethoven's symphonies rendered by the most magnificent orchestra in Christendom. Your susceptibilities are so fine in this respect that you are tormented by discord. As I said before, however, you show more taste than skill. In language you are very expressive, fluent, and copious, gesticulate naturally but not much, and are at times spontaneously eloquent.

MR. SOTHERN.—That's a mistake. Let it get outside this room, and they would have me making speeches on every stage and at every dinner-table in the land. I am never eloquent.

THE ARTIST.—Then Providence has made a mistake in your head. Perhaps you don't believe that you are a good critic, but you are. There are few men who can better analyze, illustrate, classify, com-

pare, or draw inferences, than you can. You have a nice power of discerning new truths, influences, possibilities and effects, especially in connection with your profession, hence, by reason of your constructiveness and ideality, you create originals of character which no one, that I am aware of, has yet been able to imitate. As a case in point, I recall the manner in which you re-wrote the love scene in Tom Robertson's comedy, which was the subject of some correspondence a little while ago ; and also portions of *David Garrick*, and the *Crushed Tragedian*.

JUDGE.—Yes ; and *Dundreary*, too.

"Yes," added the sculptor, "and it illustrates the correctness of my conclusions, to wit : that by reason of this nicety of comprehension added to strong individuality, concentrativeness, large language, and poetic sensibilities, you can frequently improve upon and refine that which has come from a master hand."

"By the way," said the judge, "speaking about Ned's invention, did you ever hear about his dog Wasp, who had the habit, peculiar to all the species, of being exceedingly inquisitive with reference to their neighbors ? Ned at last, becoming annoyed at the persistence of this canine investigation, one day went into a store and ordered a leather muzzle to be made with a fine cambric needle protruding from the snout. You can imagine the rest. That little terrier never made any more close acquaintances. In three

days there wasn't a dog in the neighborhood but knew Wasp to his entire satisfaction, and the moment the brutes saw the little fellow approach would stick their tails between their legs, and move off with a speed that was quite as astonishing to the little pup as it was suggestive that at some time or other they had been either badly scared or badly hurt. Even after the muzzle had been removed Wasp languished for a long time from the want of friends among his kind ; at any rate he was thoroughly cured of his familiarity."

"Yes, I have taken out a patent for that invention," said Mr. Sothern.

The phrenologist proceeded :—

"There are but one or two more things that I desire to comment upon, and then we will suspend this examination. You have unusually large preceptive faculties and form a correct judgment of character almost intuitively. Generally, you trust first impressions, and are seldom mistaken in men or women. You notice all the little things they do when least suspected, and are quick to observe the slightest exhibition of a lack of refinement. You take more kindly to those who are delicate, gentle and graceful, than to people who live in a coarser mould. I think you like to study character, and once having made a friend 'grapple to him with hooks of steel.' You needn't blush when I tell you that coupled with this peculiar gift is the disposition to be thoroughly

agreeable, to make sacrifices for the pleasure of those around you, to conciliate everybody, and to wound only when in your judgment it is absolutely necessary, though I must confess that at times, with your imperious nature, the hot words bound to your lips occasionally, and cause regrets that are quite as painful to yourself as they may have been to the subject of your passion. You never can be a hypocrite."

It was agreed at this juncture that the subject of the seance had been sufficiently diagnosed and flattered, and by common consent conversation was diverted into other and less personal channels.

APPEARANCES ARE OFTEN DECEITFUL.

"What makes him limp so?" asked an acquaintance while Sothern was personating Dundreary a few weeks ago. The reply was that it was probably to give greater effect to the character: that, in fact, "it was in the play." Nine-tenths of the people believe that he makes it, and had it not been for Philadelphia, a large brewery and a ferocious dog, the secret might have never been discovered. After Sothern ceased putting his trust in Providence (R. I.) he went to Philadelphia. Three days after, he was walking through one of the streets and just passing a large brewery when a ferocious dog which had been watching his slow and stealthy approach, sprang towards him

and fastened his teeth into the right leg. Half a dozen persons, including the owner of the dog, immediately went to Sothern's assistance, and after a long struggle succeeded in getting the dog away. They expected to find the leg severely lacerated, but what was their surprise when they found the leg to be a cork one! Mr. Wm. J. Florence states that the above is a true story, "by a large majority."

HOW MY "LORD DUNDREARY" WAS CAUGHT NAPPING BY THE "MEMBER FROM COHOSH."

A number of *bons comarades* sat down a few months ago to a dinner given in California, to Mr. Sothern. W. J. Florence was one of the party, and relates the following incident :

"Sothern, as usual, was the life of the company, and for hours entertained his hearers with a recital of his varied accomplishments. He was the prophet and the guide in every subject broached, and evidently considered himself a very 'Triton among the minnows.' Painting he seemed at home in. He had sculpture at his fingers' ends, and the most difficult features in the fine arts or the practical pursuits of labor were as nothing to this animated repository of general knowledge. He had, he said, studied painting for long years under able teachers at Naples and Dusseldorf, and had only relinquished his seat at the easel when

the greatest living masters pronounced him their peer. He spoke familiarly of the works of the ancient Egyptians, and traced the styles of all the succeeding nations down to the present day.

“In a little while the subject turned to war and its weapons, and Sothern, to the surprise of all present, appeared well versed in needle-guns, destructive bomb-shells, and everything pertaining to scientific slaughter. War, he asserted, was familiar to him in all its phases. He had studied gunnery for six years at Woolwich, England, and had in later years charged the enemy through clouds of smoke and showers of lead on many a hard-fought field. While speaking of noted military heroes, one of the gentlemen present pointed to a bronze statue of Napoleon, which occupied a corner on the mantel, and Dundreary immediately launched off into a learned dissertation on the legacies of beauty and art which, coming down from the old world, still exist in undecaying stone. The company listened in astonishment as he told of his long researches into the glories of the antique sculpture which, unlike the paintings of the pagans, were not born to die.

“No matter what topic was introduced, Sothern seized and held the fort, until he half convinced his auditors that he was in all respects, from his long years of study, more of a peer than a vassal in his multitudinous attainments. Just before the company

broke up, however, an unexpected denouement came. Florence, who, like 'Mr. Burchell' in the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' had been listening attentively to his friend's remarkable narrative, noting down his points now and then, instead of exclaiming "fudge" with Goldsmith's hero, suddenly asked : 'Ned, may I ask how old you are ?'

" 'Certainly, my dear fellow,' said Sothern, amid a breathless silence among the guests. 'On my last birthday I was forty-four.'

" 'Oh, indeed,' replied the 'Member from Cohosh,' with a quizzical expression on his countenance, 'then I must have made a mistake in my reckoning. I have been putting down the number of years you said you spent in acquiring your different branches, and I make your age exactly ninety-six.'

"This remark brought down a roar of laughter on the head of Dundreary, who, however, not at all disconcerted, ordered a fresh supply of champagne to drink the health of his friend from Cohosh."

Some two months after the above occurrence, at a breakfast given by Florence at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, New York, the attention of the company was attracted to a magnificent set of Sevres which decorated the table.

"Ah !" said Sothern, quickly, "I recognize at a glance this set, as belonging to the period of Louis XV. Modern Sevres do not show such nicety of

color or finish." He then began to tell what he knew of the ceramic art, remarking that he had spent some four years in its study. Before he had fairly reached the vitals of his subject, his eye fell upon the "Member from Cohosh," who, with card in hand, was about to repeat his note-taking. Disconcerted at the sight, for several who attended the dinner in California, were also present at the breakfast, Sothern stopped short in his narrative, and made the best of a bad bargain by exclaiming: "Billy, put that down on your card, and make me one hundred and five years old at once."

Florence took him at his word, and my Lord Dundreary vowed that he would never display his knowledge again, unless assured that Florence was N. I. T.—not in town.

FUN IN FRANCE.

"When we went to Paris," said Mr. Raymond, "to play the 'American Cousin' the only lady in the company who made a hit was the one who performed the part of May Meredith. In it she had two dances, which apparently amused the gay Frenchmen. The *impresario* of the theatre during these Terpsichorean exercises used to sit every night in one of the lower boxes, and watch the young lady with a great deal of interest. It struck Sothern and myself that it would be

an excellent opportunity to have a little fun, especially as she was inclined to be unnecessarily conceited. Accordingly we had letters sent from every little country town in France, offering fabulous amounts to her to appear as an English soubrette in a French part. The girl had these letters translated, and became so airish in her manner to all the rest of the company as the result of the flattering attentions, that we could really do nothing with her. It now occurred to us that it wouldn't be a bad idea to have a letter sent to her by the *impressario*, which was accordingly done, likewise in French; at the same time a letter written in English was sent to him purporting to come from the girl's mother. The first contained an offer to adopt and give her a French education, together with a life long engagement on the French stage; the latter informed him that the young girl was not exactly in her right mind, having had the small pox, and that if he engaged her he must take unusual care of her health, see that she retired early at night, and in short, be to her a fatherly protector. The Frenchman had this letter translated and was dumbfounded. He at once sought an interview with the young lady on the stage, and a more laughable mixture of French and English misunderstanding, of odd explanations, and angry ejaculations, and gesticulations, you never witnessed. On the one hand he tried to make her comprehend that he had never

written a letter to her, and on the other she indignantly repelled the idea that her mother had done anything of the kind to him because the old lady was dead, and she herself never had the small pox. The complication was kept up for two or three days, when we got our agent to explain the joke to both parties. The girl, however, was so disgusted and so thoroughly taken down, that she shortly after left the company and never attempted to play an English *ingenue* part in France again.

DUNDREARY IN PARIS.

"I think," remarked Mr. Raymond, "that one of the most amusing incidents during our stay in Paris was that which occurred during the performance of Dundreary. You are, perhaps, aware that at the subsidy theatres in France, no fire, not even a lighted match is permitted on the stage. You will also recall the fact that in one part of the play, Asa Trenchard has to burn a will. In order to comply with the law and at the same time get rid of this document, I was compelled to tear the will instead of applying the match in the usual way. The result was that the part was not at all a success, much of its point being lost by the tameness of the incident. At last I said to Sothern, 'I have a great mind to burn the thing anyhow and take the chances.' My misfortune was in

confiding my intention to Sothern, for he instantly gave instruction to one of the *gendarmes* who was hovering about the wings, to arrest me in the act. When the scene came on, anticipating no trouble, but expecting on the contrary to receive a recall as I always did at this juncture, I struck the match and lighted the paper. Before I knew anything else I was seized from behind by a big *gendarme* and carried bodily off the stage. Of course the audience did not know what was to pay, and I was equally in the dark. Not speaking French I could not make any explanation, and the more I struggled the tighter the *gendarme* held me in his grip. It was only when Mr. Sefton, the agent of Mr. Sothern, made his appearance and explained matters that I was released. You should have then seen how those two French soldiers went for Sothern, mad as hornets at being imposed upon, and the manner in which he disappeared down the back stairs into a convenient hiding place. Fortunately Sefton was enabled to appease the indignation of the irate Frenchmen, and in a few minutes Dundreary was permitted to come out of his retirement, and the play went on happily without the discomfiture of the audience.

A DESPERATE AMERICAN.

“During this engagement we had a frightful fight one

night, and produced a corresponding scare among the members of the company. The celebrated bill-poster of Paris and London, Willing, by name, was in the green-room and made some remark as coming from Sothern concerning me which I purposely construed into a most grievous insult. Dashing impetuously into Sothern's dressing-room, which was just off the green-room, I demanded in a loud tone that could be heard by everybody, instant satisfaction or his life, whispering to Ned to keep up the joke. Always as quick as lightning to take a hint, he presently emerged, kicking me out of his apartment into the centre of the now thoroughly alarmed people in the green-room. I rushed off to get a knife swearing vengeance. Everybody appealed to me to be quiet and tried to hold me back, while I contended that nothing but his life's blood would wipe out the insult. Of course the play had to continue, but the actors were almost afraid to go on the stage, looking on me as a wild American who, with bowie knife in hand, was about to commit a horrible murder. Meanwhile Sothern had quietly sent a note telling me to slip into his dressing-room again, get some stage blood there, lock the door, and that as soon as he came off we would have a 'time.' I followed the instructions and after the act he came down and joined me. The people in the green-room were on the alert, and between Ned and myself we gave their listening ears the bene-

fit of a full chorus of moans, groans, imprecations, struggles, and other sounds of distress among which every now and then my knife could be heard sticking into some conveniently soft substance that sounded very like a human body. Willing, whose remarks had been the cause of all this commotion, frightened almost to death, rushed after the *gendarmes*. When the latter came they demanded entrance in French. A low groan was the only response. Believing that one or both of us was nearly dead they burst open the door. Willing was the first man to rush in, and was followed by the soldiers and such of the company as were not on the stage. You can imagine their feelings when they saw Sothern and myself covered with blood lying upon the floor, with the gory knife near by, the entire apartment in confusion and bearing evidences of a desperate struggle.

“ ‘Poor fellow,’ said one, ‘has he got a pulse?’ ‘He must be dying,’ was the remark of another. ‘Go for some stretchers.’ ‘What awful fighters these Americans are!’ ‘Don’t touch the blade!’ and other similar expressions were also to be heard.

“Willing, with a horror-stricken face, stooped over and felt of Sothern. Ned partially raised his head, and feebly whispered: ‘A glass of champagne,—quick.’ The poor bill-poster didn’t stop for a glass, but knocked off the neck of a bottle, and in his haste, to the great disgust of Dundreary, nearly choked him

to death as he poured it down. At this instant I lifted my head in the same way, and, in a faint kind of way, ejaculated 'Some wine, too!' Then we both rose up on our elbows and asked for more wine, and from that position to our feet, until finally, with a hearty laugh at the success of our joke, we invited the whole party to join us in a potation. The practical *gendarmes* were the only ones who didn't see any fun in being 'sold' in this manner, although they took their share of the champagne, and I think that some of the English actors themselves, never, to this day, have learned to appreciate the pranks of the two Americans."

THE DUNDREARY LETTER.

On the occasion of one of the *conversaziones* at a pleasant dinner party, Mr. Raymond related the following incident connected with the Dundreary letter. He says: "It was written by Mr. Sothern in New Orleans while waiting for the cars, the first draft being hurriedly made on his knee on the back of an envelope. Sothern, however, was dubious with reference to reading it for the first time in so large a city as New Orleans, and as we were going to Mobile, he determined to try the experiment there on the occasion of my benefit. He did so, and its success was instantaneous. He was recalled three times, and since

then the reading of the letter has been one of the chief features of the famous play."

CONVERSATIONAL QUICKNESS.

Mr. Horace Wall, the well known dramatic agent of New York, speaking of Sothern's conversational quickness and power of repartee, gives the following illustrations of the same :

"One day while on Broadway Mr. Sothern met an old friend who was an inveterate tobacco chewer, and who, if the remark may be made of a dirty practice, was not a neat masticator. The sides of his mouth were usually besmeared with saliva, and his shirt bosom for a brown was tolerably white, but for a white was frightfully filthy. The two friends passed the compliments of the day, when Sothern, as he was about to depart, looking at his companion's shirt front and putting his finger upon a centre spot as if he wanted to purchase something; drily inquired, 'Old boy! have you got the sleeve buttons to match that?'

"On another occasion he met George C——, the friend of an actor who, for convenience sake, we will call Johnny P——, who had just died, and from whose funeral George was returning. The latter was himself in a very feeble condition of health and re-

marked : 'Well, Ned, I'm afraid it will be my turn next ; the doctors tell me that I must go to Florida, Havana, Minnesota, anywhere in fact to get out of this horrible climate. Where do you think I had better go, Ned ?'

"SOTHERN, cheerfully.—'Brace up, old boy, brace up ! Never entertain the blues. The best thing you can do, George, is to go round to the club with me and take a drink, and then I'll give you a letter to Johnny.'

"'But he may be in heaven.'

"'That's the very reason, my dear fellow, why you'll want credentials.'

"FRESH YOUNG ACTOR TO SOTHERN.—Mr. S., if I had been an actor as long as you have I should by this time be the owner of two brown stones.

"SOTHERN.—Certainly you would, my boy, one at your head and the other at your feet.

"Sothorn during the last summer, having hired an attenuated livery stable horse for a drive up the road, stopped at one of the roadside caravansaries, and while his valet was covering the animal, John McCullough came by.

"McCULLOUGH.—Ned, what do you put that



"BIRDS OF A FEATHER
FLOCK TOGETHER"



"NO BIRD WOULD BE SUCH A
FOOL AS TO
GO INTO A CORNER AND FLOCK ALL BY
HIMSELF."



"THERE'S ONLY ONE OF THOSE BIRDS WHO COULD
HAVE THAT FEATHER AND YET, EXACTLY OPPOSITE."

blanket over your horse for? he looks too weak to bear up under it.

"SOTHERN.—Oh! That is to keep the wind from blowing the hay out of him."

SOTHERN AND THE FIRE TEST.

A writer in the Chicago *Inter-Ocean* communicates to that paper under date of March 20, 1878, the following curiously descriptive article:

"Is Mr. Sothern a medium?

"This is the question that fifteen puzzled investigators are asking themselves this morning, after witnessing a number of astounding manifestations at a private seance given by Mr. Sothern last night.

"It lacked a few minutes of 12 when a number of Mr. Sothern's friends, who had been given to understand that something remarkable was to be performed, assembled in the former's room at the Sherman House and took seats in a circle around a marble-top table, which was placed in the centre of the apartment. On the table were a number of glasses, two very large bottles, and five lemons. A sprightly young gentleman attempted to crack a joke about spirits being confined in the bottles, but the company frowned him down, and for once Mr. Sothern had a sober audience to begin with.

"There was a good deal of curiosity regarding the

object of the gathering, but no one was able to explain. Each gentleman testified to the fact that Mr. Sothern's agent had waited upon him, and solicited his presence at a little exhibition to be given by the actor, *not* of a comical nature.

"Mr. Sothern himself soon after appeared, and, after shaking hands with the party, thus addressed them :

"Gentlemen, I have invited you here this evening to witness a few manifestations, demonstrations, tests, or whatever you choose to call them, which I have accidentally discovered that I am able to perform.

"I am a fire-eater, as it were. [Applause.]

"I used to *dread* the fire, having been scorched once when an innocent child. [A laugh.]

"Mr. Sothern (severely)—'I *hope* there will be no levity here, and I wish to say now that demonstrations of any kind are liable to upset me, while demonstrations of particular kinds may upset the audience.'

"Silence and decorum being restored, Mr. Sothern thus continued :

"Thirteen weeks ago, while walking up Greenwich street, in New York, I stepped into a store to buy a cigar. To show you there was no trick about it, here are cigars out of the same box from which I selected the one I that day lighted.' [Here Mr. Sothern passed around a box of tolerable cigars.]

"Well ! I stepped to the little hanging gas-jet to light it, and, having done so, stood contemplatively

holding the cigar and the gas-jet in either hand, thinking what a saving it would be to smoke a pipe, when, in my absent-mindedness, I dropped the cigar and put the gas-jet into my mouth. Strange as it may appear, I felt no pain, and stood there holding the thing in my mouth and puffing until the man in charge yelled out to me that I was swallowing his gas. Then I looked up, and, sure enough, there I was pulling away at the slender flame that came from the glass tube.

“‘I dropped it instantly, and felt of my mouth, but noticed no inconvenience or unpleasant sensation whatever.

“‘“What do you mean by it?” said the proprietor.

“‘As I didn’t know what I meant by it I couldn’t answer, so I picked up my cigar and went home. Once there I tried the experiment again, and in doing so I found that not only my mouth, but my hands and face, indeed, all of my body, was proof against fire. I called on a physician, and he examined me, and reported nothing wrong with my flesh, which appeared to be in its normal condition. I said nothing about it publicly, but the fact greatly surprised me, and I have invited you here to-night to witness a few experiments.’

“Saying this, Mr. Sothern, who had lit a cigar while pausing in his speech, turned the fire end into his mouth and sat down, smoking unconcernedly.

“‘I suppose you wish to give us the fire-test,’ remarked one of the company.

“Mr. Sothern nodded.

“There was probably never a gathering more dumb-founded than that present in the room. A few questions were asked, and then five gentlemen were appointed to examine Mr. Sothern’s hands, etc., before he began his experiments. Having thoroughly washed the parts that he proposed to subject to the flames, Mr. Sothern began by burning his arm, and passing it through the gas-jet very slowly, twice stopping the motion and holding it still in the flames. He then picked up a poker with a sort of hook on the end, and proceeded to fish a small coil of wire from the grate. The wire came out fairly white with heat. Mr. Sothern took the coil in his hands and coolly proceeded to wrap it round his left leg to the knee. Having done so, he stood on the table in the centre of the circle and requested the committee to examine the wrappings and the leg and report if both were there. The committee did so, and reported in the affirmative.

“While this was going on, there was a smile, almost seraphic in its beauty, on Mr. Sothern’s face.

“After this an enormous iron, in the shape of a horseshoe, was brought in, and, after being heated red-hot, was placed over his neck and shoulders like a horse-collar, where it cooled, and was taken off without leaving a sign of a burn.

“As a final test, a tailor’s goose was put on the coals, and, after being thoroughly heated, was placed in Mr. Sothern’s chair. The latter lighted a fresh cigar, and then coolly took his seat on the goose without the least seeming inconvenience. During the last experiment Mr. Sothern sang in an excellent tone and voice, ‘I’m Sitting on the Stile, Mary.’

“The question now is, were the fifteen auditors of Mr. Sothern fooled and deceived, or was this a genuine manifestation of extraordinary power? Sothern is such an inveterate joker that he may have put the thing up on the boys for his own amusement; but if so, it was one of the nicest tricks ever witnessed by yours truly,

ONE OF THE COMMITTEE.

“P. S.—What is equally marvelous to me is that the fire didn’t burn his clothes where it touched them, any more than his flesh.

P. C.

“[There is nothing new in this. Mr. Sothern has long been known as one of the most expert jugglers in the profession. Some years ago he gained the soubriquet of the ‘Fire King.’ He frequently amuses his friends by eating fire, though he long ceased to give public exhibitions. Probably the success of the experiments last night were largely owing to the lemons present. There’s a good deal of trickery in those same lemons.—EDITOR INTER-OCEAN.]”

A REPORTORIAL INTERVIEW ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

"I presume, Mr. Sothern, you have seen the challenge in this morning's *Inter-Ocean*. Do you intend to accept it?"

"Well," replied the comedian, with a rather amused expression, "before answering your question allow me to ring the bell and ask Mr. Hurlbut to step here a moment."

The bell was touched, and a few minutes later the proprietor of the Sherman House, looking very sleepy, and attired in a gorgeous nightcap, opened the door slowly and stood irresolute on the threshold.

"Now, look here, Sothern," he said, raising his finger threateningly, and emphasizing every word, "none of your practical jokes on me! I won't have it. At this hour all peaceably disposed cit—"

"See here, old fellow," said Sothern, taking him by the arm and gently towing him into the room, "there's no sell here. Too serious an affair, my dear boy, altogether too serious, for joking. Look here, read that," he said, showing the challenge.

Mr. Hurlbut read the challenge, and suggested that he didn't see how it concerned him, and why he should be dragged out of bed at midnight.

"But, Mr. Hurlbut," urged Sothern, "we can't pro-

ceed with this thing without your consent. Have you any objection to my giving an exhibition of the fire test in these parlors?"

"Most emphatically I have," responded Mr. Hurlbut. "Why, one of my mantel-pieces is utterly ruined with the marks of red-hot horse-shoes, that tailors' goose, and other infernal pieces of iron-mongery which you used the other night."

"But, my dear fellow," Sothern was beginning in a persuasive tone, when Hurlbut interrupted:

"There's no use talking, Sothern; I positively refuse. Aside from the danger of fire and the damage to the furniture and fixtures, I don't want my house converted into a resort for itinerant ghosts."

Sothern paused for a moment, reflected, and pulled his mustache.

"Now," said he, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll send for an iron-monger and have the floor plated with boiler iron, if you will allow me to build a furnace in the centre of the room. I merely want to make the test; I don't want to bet, because I'd feel as if I were swindling somebody. I've never tried this, but I feel perfectly sure of the result."

"What do you want with the furnace?" asked the hotel man.

"I will permit myself," said Sothern, "to be imbedded in a mass of any kind of fuel my challenger may select—tar-barrels, and rosin ad lib. Then I

will allow any member of a committee to apply the torch."

"Isn't that going a little too far, Mr. Sothern?" asked the writer.

"Well, I may be mistaken," he replied, "but I feel sure of the result, sure of it. At all events, I'll give \$10,000 to any charitable fund in this city if I do not come out unscathed."

"What!" ejaculated Hurlbut, with eyes like saucers.

"Provided, my boy," added Sothern, "my medium will undergo the same test at the same time—neither of us to remain in the furnace more than fifteen minutes after the whole mass of fuel shall be in flames, and both of us to be perfectly nude."

"But, I say, Sothern," said Harry Wall, of New York, who was among the company, "that won't do, you know! Your antagonist, you know, can't consent to that. Wrap a sheet around you, at any rate. It won't burn."

Hurlbut had been on the point of acquiescing; but this was too much for him. He drew the folds of his dressing-gown tightly around him, pronounced an emphatic veto upon the whole affair, and slid from the room.

"He won't have it. Well, we'll arrange it somehow," remarked Sothern, as the door closed.

"How did you discover this imperviousness to fire, Sothern?" asked Harry Wall.

"Imperviousness to fire is good. Just as stated in last Monday's *Inter-Ocean*."

"You were buying a cigar——"

"Precisely," broke in Sothern. "In a fit of abstraction I let the cigar drop, and the shopman caught me swallowing the illuminated oscillating gas-jet! This was many years ago, however, and not, as stated, a few months since."

"Have you ever subjected yourself," the writer asked, "to other tests than those mentioned in the *Inter-Ocean*?"

"Oh, yes; played six weeks in Philadelphia during the exposition, with the thermometer in my dressing-room at 128."

"And you have stood other warm tests from the press occasionally. But, seriously, have you any belief in spiritualism?"

"No; I only know I do these things, but how, I can't say."

"You've heard of Bishop, who was here two weeks ago? He offered to put a bar of steel, heated to a white heat, on his shoulder, and place on top of it a five-pound weight."

"A mere nothing, my dear fellow; I'll be willing to submit to that, provided the money goes to a charity

—say to a lunatic asylum for believers in the supernatural.”

“Have you ever submitted to this test?”

“No; but I’ve done more than that. I’ve had camphene poured all over my head and body and lighted. This is a frequent test of mine, and during it I only feel a mild warmth, like an autumn day. But all this class of work is child’s play. We are dallying with the topic merely.”

“Your power in this line is new to the people here.”

“Used to do it in Europe. Remember in London—but here, look at this scrap-book, and you’ll see two or three accounts,” said the Crushed Tragedian, placing the book on the table.

There were numerous extracts, some flattering and others condemnatory. Harry Wall was asked to read them, and the first selected was a cutting from a London letter to a very sober, conservative Scotch sheet called the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*. Perhaps the publication of this will give a better idea of Mr. Sothern’s powers than any elaborate description. Here it is :

“Spiritualism has been a prominent theme lately, and some mysterious manipulations given by Mr. E. A. Sothern the other night, before a party of gentlemen have increased the interest. At the city house of Sir Michael O’Toole, last Tuesday evening assembled

Mr. F. L. Rush, of Lloyds ; Mr. Wallace Hoar, manager of the United Service Club ; Sir John Reed, of the Carleton Club ; Mr. J. L. Toole, comedian ; Mr. Charles Matthews, comedian ; the Rev. Charles Eaton, M. A., and Mr. Mercer Simpson, of the Theatre Royal, London. In the presence of these seven gentlemen Mr. Sothern exhibited the possession of powers which, to any but an observer would be considered simply incredible. Whether they, the feats, were performed by spiritual or material agency, remains a profound mystery, the celebrated comedian refusing to enlighten those present. A few of the tricks—for I refuse to believe they were more—may be worth recording. An ordinary table stood in the centre of the room. He requested the seven gentlemen—by the way, seven appears to be his favorite number—to go into the next room, and he would guarantee that he would make the table too heavy for their combined strength. They did as they were requested. When they returned they moved it, but it was with the greatest effort of the combined seven. The fact that it was moved at all by seven men's strength appeared to disappoint Sothern. The next thing he did was to ask if they desired the piano moved to any part of the room. It was a remarkably heavy instrument. A spot was designated, and the piano began waltzing to the spot to the 'Mabel Waltz,' played by some means or other upon its own keys. A

few tests of a similar nature were given, when Sothern disappeared for a minute or so, and reappeared in his night-shirt. ‘Gentlemen,’ said he, ‘I will give you another example. If any of you will open the window in this or the next room, and partially turn down the lights, I will make my exit at one window, and while I am out will float around a little and then glide into any window you will please to designate. It was agreed to try the test, not without some objection on the part of Sir John Reed and J. L. Toole, who feared for the life of their friend. Sothern gently bent forward and gracefully floated out of a four-story window. The lights had been turned down, but they were turned up again in time to see him entering, feet first, the window of the next room. Of course the thing was a trick. It has been done by Hume, though not in the full glare of gaslight. He never touched the windows as he entered. As he came into full view, the gaslight gradually died away, and the company were left in total darkness.”

The reading of the above made the company nervous evidently. As soon as Harry Wall had ceased, each man excused himself and left the room.

THE DYING ACTRESS.

The following letter to the editor explains itself :

“DEAR SIR :—I understand that you are soon to

issue a book of anecdotes and incidents about E. A. Sothern, the actor. Permit me to add one which will not detract from the fame of the great actor, but rather add fresh laurels to his crown. In looking over the morning papers some time since, my attention was attracted by a notice in one of them, calling for aid in behalf of a 'poor actress, sick and in need.' I determined to call in person, and see if the story was true, and did so. She lived in a tenement in one of our crowded streets. Upon entering the house I noticed a handsome carriage in front of the door, from which a man was taking an armful of variously sized bundles. These he carried up-stairs, and I said to myself, some good angel has surely responded to this cry for aid. Climbing up the rickety steps and entering the musty apartment, everything was found that could exhibit poverty of the worst kind. Prone upon a rude bed was the sufferer, a pale, haggard woman, whose features were pinched with hunger. Standing near her and in the act of raising her head to offer a glass of wine, was a tall, elegant looking man, in whose blue eyes one could read a world of sweet charities. He laid her back upon her pillow as tenderly as a woman could have done, and finished the story he evidently had been reading to her. Then, after taking the parcels from the man, and placing them within the invalid's reach, he put a slip of paper in her hand

and wished her good-bye, saying, as he closed the door, 'I will send you a nurse as soon as possible.'

"I advanced towards the sick woman, who had unfolded the little slip of paper and was wiping the tears from her eyes, and said, 'You seem to have a kind friend.'

"'A kind friend! ah, more; a good angel. And who would think, to see him in Lord Dundreary, that such a heart was concealed beneath that exterior?'

"'Why, you don't say that is the man I have laughed myself sick over in Dundreary and Brother Sam.'

"'Yes, that is Mr. Sothern the actor, and a kinder, truer friend, in sunshine or in sorrow, does not exist. See this check for \$50, and all these things which he has brought me; and I am only one out of many others who share his charities, and of whom the world knows naught.'

"Can a sermon say more?

"MRS. G. W. M."

THE LATE GEORGE HOLLAND.

Mr. Sothern one day, while recalling some of his early associations with the old actors, turned to a worn and faded manuscript of Mr. George Holland, in which are detailed the following interesting reminiscences of that dead actor's school days. They have

never before been published. By permission of Mr. Sothern it is reproduced here. It says :

“About the year 1806 I used to attend school at Berhampstead, Hertfordshire, then conducted by the Rev. Dr. Dupree.

“The doctor was celebrated for his whipping propensities, and derived great pleasure in hearing his victim yell, during the operation. He was more lenient to one who did so lustily. But his mode of punishment was peculiar. He would pace the floor, delivering a salutary lecture upon the offense committed, and, every time he passed the delinquent, he administered a sharp blow, to make his language more impressive. Holland received his first and only punishment in the following manner, which he thus relates :

“One evening, just prior to bed-time, the outdoor fag was dispatched through a secret hole in the fence, to the tavern, for fried sausages, and I was deputed to wait in the yard, having previously asked leave of absence from one of the teachers, to receive and convey them to our bedroom. Just on the stroke of nine the boy returned, carrying the sausages, smoking hot, in a platter covered with a clean, white napkin, handed them to me, and rushed into the school-room. I was slowly following, when the door was shut and bolted in my face. I listened a moment, and then heard the doctor calling the roll. Feeling secure from

punishment in the knowledge that I had leave of absence from the teacher, my only anxiety was to smuggle in the sausages. A happy idea struck me. I rolled the napkin tightly around both platter and sausages, slipped them under my jacket up my back, knocked boldly at the door, was admitted, and took my seat at one of the writing-desks. In a few moments I became very uneasy; I felt the hot gravy running down my back, and fancied I could smell the savory odor. I was not mistaken, for presently the doctor began to 'sniff,' 'sniff,' 'sniff,' very suspiciously. He approached the school-room door, opened it, and again exercised his olfactories, at the same time observing to one of the teachers that there was a 'strong smell of cooking somewhere.' The odor became so great that there was a general sniffing among the boys, and I could hear the whispered exclamations: 'I smell it;' 'So do I;' 'Don't it smell prime?' etc. The doctor, failing to trace the cause from which the delicious perfume came, closed the door, and returned. As he passed my desk, he suddenly halted, and giving a long sniff, exclaimed: 'Bless me! the smell is very strong hereabout.'

"Whether my guilty looks betrayed me I don't know, but all eyes were fixed upon me. The doctor, supposing I had something contraband in my lap, leaned over to see, in which act, to assist himself, he placed his right hand upon the next boy's shoulder, and his left

directly upon the sausages under my coat. I writhed terribly, for the pressure was exceedingly painful upon the blistered skin. He quickly withdrew his hand, lifted up my jacket, drew forth our prospective supper, placed it upon the desk, opened the saturated napkin, and gazed a moment in silence. Then the anticipation of pleasure he was about to receive in the indulgence of the rod made him facetious. 'So,' said he, 'here is a pattern of a Greek scholar. Not satisfied with learning the language, he must also live in grease (Greece).' There was a general titter among the boys, which was suddenly stopped by the doctor exclaiming in loud tones, 'Take him up! Take him up! I'll execute a map of "Greece" for him.' I was mounted upon the back of a lad in a twinkling; the doctor flourished his rod, and brought it down with a hearty will. Remembering his leniency towards shouting boys, and having excellent lungs, I roared louder than any boy ever did before. It being nine o'clock and a quiet evening, it was said they heard my cries over the entire village. I imagine that recollections of my dreadful roaring ever after saved me from punishment, for the doctor got finely rated for cruelty to his scholars, by the villagers who heard my yells. While I remained in school, I was frequently pointed out by the scholars as the 'great traveller; one who had been all over grease.'"

THE BARON OF BIRMINGHAM.

Mr. Sothern also related the following incident in connection with the above :

In May, 1817, George Holland was engaged by R. W. Elliston, then the manager of the theatre at Birmingham. Holland's salary was fifteen shillings per week, he having at this time but little experience as an actor. His first appearance during this engagement, happened as follows :

The opening pieces were "Bertram," and "The Broken Sword." Holland was cast for one of the monks in "Bertram," and the Baron in the "Broken Sword." After reading the parts, he went to Mr. Brunton, and stated that he was quite a novice in the profession, having only played two comic parts at the Olympic, and felt that he could not play the parts assigned to him, either with credit to the establishment, or pleasure to himself, being convinced that if he had any ability for the stage, it was quite in another line of business.

Mr. Brunton replied : "I know nothing of your engagement, or your theatrical abilities ; you must do the best you can with them, for I shall not alter the cast." Finding it useless to argue the subject, Mr. Elliston being absent, he concluded to take Mr. Brunton's advice, and do the best he could until Mr. Ellis-

ton's return ; and then have a full understanding respecting the particulars of his engagement.

The following is Holland's description of the manner in which he personated those characters : " I studied the parts of the Monk and the Baron, but had not a single theatrical property. Bodie told me he would get the wardrobe-keeper to select the dresses, and he would assist me at night. This he failed to do, but requested a gentleman who played one of the Monks, and shared my room, to aid me in dressing. The latter did so, and I flattered myself that I made a fair appearance, and got through the performance without particular fault. The gentleman who played the first Monk, said I had a very good voice, but my articulation was so d——d bad he could only make out a word here and there. This was correct, for I remember speaking in what I called my tragedy voice, a deep tone. 'Bertram' being a tragedy, I thought it requisite, and not being perfect in the lines, I didn't stick for words, but kept 'wha-whaing' some rambling deep tones, until I gave the cue, which I took care to remember. This was the cause of the gentleman's remarks.

"After the play I hurried to my room to prepare for the Baron. I found a queer-looking dress, red stockings, and an old pair of russet shoes with large white rosettes lying on my table. I had to stuff the shoes to keep them on my feet. My friend the Monk

dressed me, completing the costume with a large ruff around my neck ; then, surveying me from head to foot, exclaimed : ‘ There, my boy ! that’s the ticket ! now for your mug—sit down and I’ll paint you a prime old man’s face.’ For all this attention of course I felt grateful. Another gentleman dressing in the same room, said he would hear me repeat the part, while my face was being painted, for which offer I kindly thanked him, feeling rather dubious about being perfect. While my artistic friend was ‘ lining ’ my face (as it is termed) he would thus comment upon it, occasionally, stepping back to observe the effect.

“ ‘ Ah, that’s it ; another line just here ; there ! now then, a dark shade for the hollow cheeks, that’s capital, ain’t it, Bill ? ’ appealing to the gentleman who was hearing me recite my part. ‘ It will have a good effect at a distance. Now for your wig,’ which he stuck on my head, without my seeing it. I felt it was too small, and told him so, but he still kept tugging at it, with the remark : ‘ Why ! what a thundering thick head you’ve got ; ha ! a little of your hair seen—soon settle that ! ’ and he rubbed the whitening ball all around the edge of it, to cover the hair, and make it agree with the wig. ‘ There, that’s it ! look Bill, how well the wig assimilates with the face. Prime, isn’t it ? ’

“ Having now finished, I asked him for the looking

glass, that I might see myself. He said that Mr. Elliot had just taken the glass with him, as some of the dressing-rooms were not furnished with all the requisites.

“‘You’re all right, however, my boy, there’s no need of a glass, and there goes the curtain bell. Better get to your post, ready to go on.’

“The dressing-room was under the stage, and on my way to the first wing, I could hear the dialogue on the stage. Not wishing to be bothered by any observation before I went on, I paused and repeated my part, until the time arrived for me to be at the wing ; then up I went.

“Mr. Brunton, the stage manager, who played Ester-ven, was standing in the entrance ; as soon as he saw me he started, and exclaimed :

“‘My God ! who are you?’

“His manner and question rather confused me, but I replied faintly : ‘I’m the Baron.’

“‘The Baron ? the devil !’ said he. ‘What on earth do you look like ? You can’t go on the stage, sir. That figure—’

“Just then Mr. Elliot, who played Claudie, linked his arm in mine, saying : ‘Holland, that’s our cue,’ and dragged me on the stage, where we were greeted with a roar of laughter, such as I never heard equalled. This reception, with Mr. Brunton’s furious manner of speaking to me, drove all recollection of my part

out of my head. However, I proceeded to say something, amid a chorus of hilarious remarks such as 'Beautiful,' 'Go it, Wigsby!' 'Bravo, bravo,' &c. When the noise somewhat subsided, a fellow in the gallery roared out in a serious, sepulchral voice, 'Take in your legs, young Baron.' This settled me, and I dashed off the stage, ran to my dressing-room, crammed my shoes, stockings, cap, and all the small articles into a carpet bag—threw my cloak over my head and shoulders, and bolted from the theatre amid shouts of 'Stop him! stop him!' But I didn't stop until safely domiciled in my own room. There, throwing off my cloak and dashing clothes and bag on the floor, I sank into a chair exhausted, feeling a sort of choking sensation in my throat, and moisture in my eyes. After a while, getting a little more composed, I took a look at myself in the glass; when, notwithstanding my vexation, I couldn't help bursting into an immoderate fit of laughter, for of all the 'Guys' I ever beheld, my appearance was the most ridiculous. No part of the dress had the least appearance of propriety—my face was nothing but a mass of black, white and red lines, immense black eyebrows, with glaring red forehead—a kind of pantaloons' dirty white wig, with high top knot, and side curls frizzed out to a point, making the wig in the shape of a triangle, with a large black tail sticking out behind. The wig was just stuck upon the top of my head, with a

broad band of chalk around it, to cover my own black hair, which was quite prominent. I gazed at myself some time, exclaiming: 'I'm the Baron, am I? Yes, I'm the Baron—and a d——d handsome Baron I am!' The following morning I sent all the various parts of the Baron's dress to the theatre, determined not to go there until Mr. Elliston arrived. The boy returned and said that my name was chalked up in large letters on the walls all about the stage door. 'Holland, the Baron of Birmingham.' That settled me, and I 'took in my legs' with a determination never to let them be seen in that part of England again. It was months before I heard the last of the joke."

FAREWELL BENEFIT AND SPEECH IN NEW YORK.

On the occasion of his last appearance in New York, the great audience present attested their appreciation of Mr. Sothern by frequently calling him before the curtain. He was eventually obliged to make two speeches, and with the reproduction of one of these, the present volume is concluded.

In his first one he merely stated that he had carefully written a long and most interesting speech, but that unfortunately he had lost it and begged leave to go and look for it, as, not having memorized it, he hadn't the ghost of an idea what it was all about. On

the conclusion of "The Crushed Tragedian" he was again recalled, and, pretending to be intensely nervous, said :

"Ladies and gentlemen, I'm blessed if I can find that speech. I can't for the life of me remember the beginning, but I'll try the middle or the end, and wander about it, if you'll kindly give me rounds of applause whenever it strikes you as singularly bad. The good points will take care of themselves—at least, I hope so. This is the one hundred and twenty-sixth performance I have given on this stage. Eighty-four times have I appeared in 'The Crushed,' which piece I was obliged to withdraw from the bills owing to a severe sore throat. By the way, you know all this, but I'll gradually arrive at a point. All I ask is, as prize fighters say, 'Time !' Mr. Byron has, in 'The Crushed,' most cleverly and good naturedly satirized the old school of provincial tragic acting, and has kindly allowed me to 'build up' the part of Fitzaltamont, and make a special study of it. I have succeeded beyond my utmost hopes, for press and public have universally acknowledged that, as a creation, if I may use the word, Fitz is fully equal to Dundreary. But enough of myself. Many thanks to the gentleman in the stalls who says 'no, no !' but if I don't rattle on I shall lose the thread of what I am trying to arrive at, so I repeat 'enough of myself;' for I want to speak of a dear old

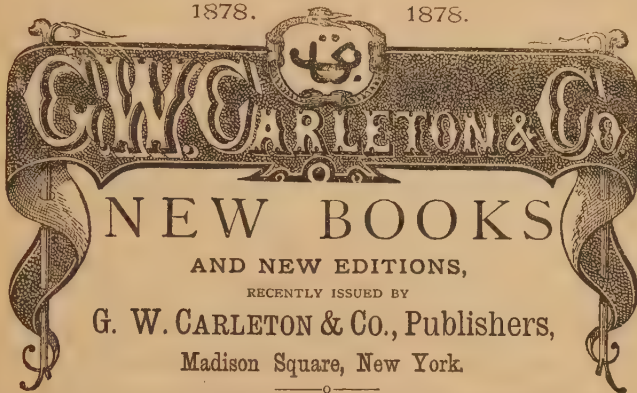
friend of mine, Mr. John T. Raymond, who will more than fill my place on these boards on Monday night. (Good!) I knew that would 'bring down the house!' Do it again. Thank you. As *Colonel Sellers*, he has stamped himself.—(Voice from the dress circle—'He's what?') I don't mean he's postage stamped himself; I mean he's proven himself one of the finest character actors of the age. On Friday next he will have performed *Colonel Sellers* 1,000 times, and if he lives, you may eventually add two or three 0's and say 'there's millions in it!' (Applause.) Ah! I had you again. Thanks. Now I'll have a fly at something else. I wish publicly to thank Mr. Henry Abbey, the manager of this theatre, for his kindness, thoughtfulness and liberality. My thanks are also due to the ladies and gentlemen who have so greatly helped me through what I am proud to call a most successful engagement. To the press I am much indebted for the generous way in which they have criticised our performances, and especially for the kind words of encouragement they gave me when I made the bold and dangerous experiment of satirizing a school of acting that some even yet believe in. With Mr. Byron's permission I shall write in (he would do it much better, but he won't; he hasn't the time) another scene, in which *Fitzaltamont*, failing as a lecturer on the 'Carriway Tribe,' turns prestidigitateur (what a frightfully long word), I mean a conjurer. I

merely add that to make things extra clear. Robert Heller is a very old friend of mine, and he has, in the kindest manner, been teaching me the wildest sorts of tricks. They do look so easy, and they are so difficult. He thinks nothing at all of pulling babies and bird cages out of his boots, and putting them up his sleeve or palming them. But then he requires music. Now, I don't. That gives me encouragement. As to Miss Heller, she has most graciously for months past endeavored to explain to me the 'Second Sight' mystery. I've conquered the 'First Sight.' It's the 'Second Sight' that floors me. For instance, in conjuring, I can take a common hat, like this—we'll call it a common hat, but it isn't—and you see at once how, by a pure effort of memory, I gently produce a common baby, weighing thirty-two pounds and a few ounces. Of course, it's a fearful strain on the mind; but you see at a glance how it is done, don't you? Well, I'll do it again. (Voice from stalls—'When?') When I return from England. Good night. God bless everybody!"

THE END.

1878.

1878.



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